THE STORY
OF THE DRAMA

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Frontispiece

A GREEK TRAGIC ACTOR.

A wall painting, photograph by Alinari, showing the actor fatigued and resting after his performance. Mask removed and placed on a table.

From Nicoll: Development of the Theater.

The Story of the Drama

Beginnings to the Commonwealth

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T243

by
JOSEPH RICHARD TAYLOR
Professor in Boston University
Dramatic Literature and Comparative Drama

~~2969~~

Expression is but Revelation

1930

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To

MY WIFE

PREFACE

THE modern student of drama is fortunate in the wealth of anthologies and technical works which have come from the press in recent years. There have appeared Histories of the Drama, Stories of the Theater, Biographical Works, Handbooks of Criticism, Collections of Plays, all valuable, but lacking organic connection. The acquisition of a well-rounded library of these theatrical works is beyond the means of the ordinary student. It is the aim of the publishers and the editor of the *Story of the Drama* to provide at a moderate cost authentic material sufficient to furnish an adequate working equipment for every student and teacher of drama. Each volume may be used independently, yet each will have its place as a unit in a carefully planned whole.

This first volume, while complete in itself, serves as an introduction to the series, and it also prepares the reader for the second volume, which will contain a selection of plays ranging from Æschylus, illustrating the Greek drama, to Shirley, the "last of the Elizabethans."

In writing the book, the author kept in mind primarily students who are carrying on academic work in drama; at the same time he desired to interest and profit the great host of intelligent theater-goers, members of drama leagues and other organizations, who seek in the theater something more than the entertainment of an afternoon or evening.

To satisfy in a single volume the needs of so complex a group was no easy task. A strictly technical treatise suited to the advanced specialist would fail to attract the general reader; a merely entertaining surface treatment would deprive the book of most of its value to serious students.

Above all, the author has endeavored to express himself clearly, and as far as possible, in non-technical language. It

has not seemed wise to cumber the pages with footnotes which would merely distract the general reader; the references to standard works will assist those who desire to study more minutely the topics treated in the various chapters.

Although the general plan of the volume made it advisable to relegate to an appendix the "Principles of Dramatic Criticism," it is hoped that the definitions and critical suggestions there given will prove helpful not only to the general reader, but to students who, in their work, are constantly confronted by unexplained technical terms. Possibly teachers of the drama may also find, here and there, hints which will prove useful in the classroom.

Special thanks are due to Mr. Martin Luther, President of the Expression Company, for help and coöperation at every stage of the preparation of this book; he placed at the service of the author all the resources of his organization; he generously, of his own volition, doubled the number of cuts which had been originally planned; he made valuable practical suggestions regarding the number and arrangement of the chapters of the book. It has been a privilege to work with him.

Boston, September 15, 1930.

INTRODUCTION

Are Professors Pedants?

There is ceaseless warfare between newspaper dramatic critics and professional teachers of drama. Although it is an æsthetic warfare it is not a war of the roses for the missiles employed are verbal rather than botanical. Hitherto the challenging taunts have come from the camp of the dramatic critics; the professors have remained silent under provocation, under dire provocation they may fairly claim. A certain journal has as its dramatic editor a man excellent as a critic, a man whose incisive and penetrating reviews of stage performances put him in the front rank of his profession. If this critic would confine himself to his legitimate work all would be well; but he will not or he cannot stick to that work; like Horace's painter who could not refrain from inserting his favorite cypress tree into a painting even if he were depicting a shipwreck, this critic feels an irresistible urge to prod the Drama League and college professors of Drama. His acrid references to the League and to Professors could be used as material for a clinical diagnosis. If he feels somewhat out of sorts he lashes the Drama League; if he is having a bad day he takes it out of college professors; if he is suffering the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune he jumps upon both the League and the Professors.

The Drama League is abundantly able to handle its end of the controversy. From our personal recollection of the lively proceedings at a meeting of the advisory council of the League we earnestly advise this critic to put the soft pedal on his animadversions of this excellent organization. We say this for the honorable critic's own good, for he, like Brutus, is an honorable man; so are they all, for that matter, honor-

able men. But, say these newspaper critics, "You college teachers are pedantic." "If so it is a grievous fault, and grievously must teachers answer it."

But are we pedantic? If so, we deserve all that has thus far come to us. As good a formulation of charges as we have seen is that of John Garrett Underhill: "Criticism in the United States is for the most part in the hands of journalists or of college professors, to whom art is too often either so much copy or an excuse for a write-up, or else a matter of rules and traditions, rooted in and most richly productive at some point in the distant past. In this system the writer, the creator as such has no part, and it is not too much to say that he has little or no influence except in the most indirect manner in shaping the æsthetic conceptions which prevail. Of course this is a very evil thing, because the creative impulse is the life of art, and to smother it under the false face of advertising or the dead-weight of pedantry is to make art something remote, whereas its appeal must be by its nature direct, if it is to live at all."

Note Mr. Underhill's shocking association of newspaper men with college professors in his castigation. Can it be possible that even newspaper critics are fallible? Is art to them "so much copy or an excuse for a write up?" As we note on first nights the dramatic critics rushing from their seats long before the end of the play in a frenzied effort to get their copy into the morning editions, and as we read a few hours later the contradictory critical reviews of the play, critiques which in some cases accurately reflect the judgment of the audience, in others are grotesquely opposed to the sentiments of men and women who had given careful heed to the entire play, we wonder whether the hastily written reviews were "so much copy" and "excuse for a write-up," or really genuine and worthwhile dramatic criticism.

Even a professor with all his pedantry has occasional moments of fairness. We believe that there are newspaper critics who show a subtle insight into the real significance of the plays which they are obliged to criticize at top speed. These men

have the true critical spirit, a spirit animated by long experience and by extensive knowledge of the history of the drama. For these men we have profound admiration and respect. This is the sincere tribute of a college professor of drama to the genuine newspaper critics whose able reviews he is constantly quoting and praising in the classroom. Can the critics, in return, find anything good to say of college professors of drama? Is there an essential difference in the mental and æsthetic equipment of the two groups? Suppose we draw up as full a category as possible of the necessary qualifications of a newspaper critic and compare them item by item with that of a college professor of drama. The newspaper critic must have a thorough knowledge of the history of the drama: granted; the college professor also must have this knowledge; the newspaper critic should be able to read foreign plays in the original as a basis for criticism of translations and adaptations; professors must have this knowledge; dramatic critics must be assiduous theater-goers; dramatic professors of the type of the late Brander Matthews spend a large part of their evenings in the theater. The dramatic critic must have something that books and study alone cannot impart, a mysterious intuition, a highly developed æsthetic sense that enables him accurately to estimate a dramatic work of art. In this last requirement lies the chief indictment against college professors. Have they this intuition, this æsthetic sense? If they can meet this supreme test, they can show themselves the equals of their critical newspaper colleagues. But have they this crowning gift? Mr. Underwood intimates that "too often" art is to professors "a matter of rules and traditions rooted in and most richly productive at some point in the distant past." It is difficult either to admit or to repudiate offhand this charge against college professors. Probably there are dogmatic rule-bound professors of drama; we are quite certain that there are some who are as free as are newspaper critics from dogmatism and pedantry. Much depends upon our interpretation of the word "rules." To some professors undoubtedly a code of rules is a rigid frame into which a play must snugly fit or run the risk of critical an-

athema. The writer once had a professional colleague with this constricted outlook; if a student presented to the faculty a petition of an unusual sort, this professor rose from his chair, extended toward the presiding officer a threatening forefinger and solemnly remarked: "But it is against the rule." This professor lived in the past.

The men of rules are by no means limited to college faculties. There have been periods when observance of "rules" was made the criterion of the value of a play by dramatic critics as well as by professors. Corneille learned much about the cramping effect of rules in his famous controversy over *The Cid*, as we show in our chapter on the Unities. Voltaire sneered at Shakespeare as a barbarian because he did not observe the "rules." The days in which the rules ruled everybody have happily passed, and it is to be hoped have passed forever. Today a younger generation of critics and, we trust, of professors, has a saner concept of the meaning of a "rule"; to them a rule is not an absolute formula, a method of procedure which must be followed at any cost. To this newer school a "rule" simply represents a summing up of the teachings of experience regarding the most effective method of procedure in a given situation. To them "rule" does not mean "must"; it simply means "advisable." The new attitude is well summed up by a leading modern critic: "Pedagogues make rules and genius breaks them." Excellent advice,—for geniuses, but until the young aspirant for dramatic fame has proved himself a genius, it is advisable for him to profit by the experience of the long procession of playwrights stretching back twenty-four hundred years to Aeschylus. Eugene O'Neill, an undoubted genius, can write successfully a play which begins at 5:30 P. M. and continues until 11 o'clock with an intermission of an hour and a half for dinner; but it is notable that the great host of dramatic writers have learned to time so carefully the length of their plays that all the theaters in a given city dismiss their audiences at approximately the same moment. It is not a dramatic necessity that an evening performance shall begin at 8:30 and end at 10:45, but it is thoroughly ad-

visable to have it end at about that time in spite of the innovation of Eugene O'Neill's *Strange Interlude.*

How, then, will the emancipated and modern college professor approach a play which he intends to discuss in the classroom? In essentially the same way as the emancipated and modern newspaper critic. What, precisely, is this way? Francis Bacon, in his *Cogitata et Visa,* written in 1607, has shown all critics an excellent way: "Having freed our minds from old theories, opinions, and common notions, we must approach particular phenomena afresh, without bias and with the innocent eyes of a child." Note the freedom from dogmatism of this method. We should take up a play with no pronounced and arbitrary "rules" in mind, with no preliminary mental tests already formulated. Developing into a practical form the undogmatic method of Francis Bacon we suggest four simple questions which would, we hope, absolve the college professor from the charge of pedantry and bigotry. We do not even claim that these questions are of any special value; we simply suggest that they be given a careful examination. After seeing or reading a play the newspaper critic, the professor, the playgoer may find profit in asking and answering the following questions:

1. Who is the man?
2. What is he trying to do?
3. How does he try to do it?
4. Does he do it?

Let us take up and explain, in detail, these four questions.

1. *Who is the man?* The answer to this question will often give us a clearer insight into the contents and spirit of a play. Take, as an illustration, *The Hairy Ape.* Who is the author? Eugene O'Neill, a man who has an extensive first-hand acquaintance with the fo'castle of square-rigged ships, and the stokers of ocean liners. It was a stoker named Driscoll, whom he met in a saloon in New York City, that suggested to O'Neill the original conception of this play. This stoker Driscoll jumped overboard and was drowned in mid-ocean; Dris-

coll's suicide and the probable reasons for his act gave O'Neill the starting point of his play. Who, then, is the man? Eugene O'Neill, a man who from his life as a sailor and his personal acquaintance with stokers has wrought into a powerful drama his unique experiences. We do not absolutely need this preliminary information concerning the author but with this knowledge as a starting point the play takes on a more significant aspect. We feel assured that the author knows exactly what he is talking about.

Or, take *The Intruder*. Who is the author? A Belgian by the name of Maeterlinck. A Belgian, not a Frenchman, though he writes in French. Instinctively we think of the mystical race of the author; instantly we recall the weird landscape of Belgium,—the mediæval architecture, the wet winds, the low-lying gray clouds, the lazy windmills, the stagnant canals, the slowly gliding swans. We are now in the proper mood to understand the uncanny midnight scene, the shuddering approach of *Death*, the remorseless *Intruder*.

We may take up next, *The Red Robe*. Who is the author? A Frenchman, not a Belgian. A Frenchman; we therefore anticipate an orderly, logical presentation of a clear-cut theme. A Frenchman, who, to use his own words, "was born with the soul of an apostle"; he has, therefore, a definite message to his countrymen. What that message was, we shall answer in our second question.

2. *What is he trying to do?* What is the author of *The Hairy Ape* trying to do? Mr. O'Neill himself tells us. He is trying to place before us a human being who is groping his way blindly through spiritual problems which are identical with those which we ourselves have to face. We might, at first glance, suppose that a stoker shoveling coal in the furnace room of an ocean steamer has nothing in common with us. But his insistent cry "Where do I belong?" is the very question which is troubling all men and all women who are "tryin' to tink." What is Maeterlinck trying to do in *The Intruder?* He is attempting to depict the silent tread of unescapable death. In *The Red Robe*, Brieux is trying to preach to his

countrymen on a definite theme: "The French judiciary are not venal or corrupt, but they are too often influenced in their judicial decisions by considerations of the political power or influence of those who are brought before them for trial."

3. *How does he do it?* Note the form of the question. We do not ask,—"Does he do this or that? Does he observe the Unities? Does he present a series of minor crises leading to a supreme crisis? Does each incident lead to the next either inevitably or at least without violating probability?" There was a time not many years ago when the critic came to a performance all primed to ask such questions as these and to make them the critical test of the play. Today we approach, or should approach, each play with Bacon's "innocent eyes of a child." Today we say to a dramatist, "You may do anything, if you can do it." And that is an all important "if." * Clayton Hamilton, that sage critic, puts it in his usual common-sense way. He represents a playwright as saying: "You tell me that such and such a process has never yet been followed in the drama: very well,—I will show you that it can be followed, with both artistic and popular success. If, after this assumed assertion, the creative artist fails in his endeavor, his failure may be taken as an evidence of the inviolability of the principle he has assaulted; but if he succeeds, there can be no other recourse for the critic than to discard the ancient formula and to induce a new one." How then does O'Neill do it in *The Hairy Ape?* In a unique way; he departs from the usual method, as he has a perfect right to do. He abandons the old act structure, and he divides his play into eight scenes. He ignores the Unities of Time and Place. He disregards the modern critical taboo against the soliloquy; he even allows a character to overhear another person talking to himself. He makes a strikingly effective use of recurrent situations, sounds and words,—the throbbing beat of the engines, the insistent whistle which drives the stokers into a frenzy, Yank's Rodin's *Thinker* attitude, his reiterated "Dey don't belong," his angry "Can't youse see I'm tryin' to tink?" How does Maeter-

* "Studies in Stagecraft," Clayton Hamilton. Henry Holt & Co., New York.

linck produce his desired results in *The Intruder?* By a one-act play which employs emotional symbolism as the medium. Nearly every line has an esoteric meaning which may escape the casual reader. The blind grandfather who can see with the eyes of the spirit what escapes the physical eyes of the other members of the family; the "sound of a scythe being sharpened outside," grimly suggestive of the dread Reaper; the flickering lamp that typifies the glimmering spark of life; the invisible Intruder who is 'pushing as if trying to get into the room.'" Symbolism throughout, a symbolism that may escape the careless or casual reader but a symbolism that awes the thoughtful auditor or reader. How does Brieux handle *The Red Robe?* In the orthodox French method; a four-act play conforming to the traditional principles of French dramatic writing.

4. *Does the playwright produce the intended effect?* We have by our previous questions learned who the writer is, what he is trying to do, and how he tries to do it. The last, the supreme question is, has he done it? How can we answer this question? With practically no divergent opinions the modern critics make *emotional response* the supreme test of a play. A play that "gets over the footlights," that moves an audience to tears, to laughter, to patriotism, to fierce hatred of villainy, to love of home, of country, is, according to the modern theory, a successful play. Herein lies one, at least, of the reasons why such a play as *Abie's Irish Rose* ran five years despite the almost unanimous condemnation of newspaper critics. The primary appeal of this play is to the emotions, the common humanity of the audience. Technically, from the standpoint of "rules," the play is full of holes; but the audience who knew nothing about "rules," and cared less, was moved to laughter and to tears over the merrymaking and the pathetic scenes which crowded hard upon one another. For those who have no ready access to the newer dramatic criticism we may cite a few of the recent opinions regarding the arousing of emotion as the supreme practical test of a play.

[1] "The theatre audience is largely emotional rather than highly intellectual."

[2] "A play is an orderly representation of life, arousing emotion in an audience."

[3] "Ordinarily an audience cares little for subtle characterization, brilliant wit, delicate poetry, or consistent logic, though it objects to none of these qualities provided it is given the action and emotion which it craves."

[4] "While action is popularly held to be central in drama, emotion is really the essential."

We may apply the emotional test to the three plays which we have been using as illustrations. Does *The Hairy Ape* stir the emotions? Emphatically yes! Even in the printed form of the play we are thrilled by the primitive Yank, who in his Rodin's *Le Penseur* attitude is "tryin' to tink." When at the close of the play he falls crushed and bleeding at the feet of the hideous gorilla, we shudderingly echo the author's closing words: "And, perhaps the Hairy Ape at last belongs." Has Maeterlinck succeeded with *The Intruder?* Emphatically, yes! *The Intruder* is one of the most awe-inspiring plays in the whole realm of "one-acters." The reader shudders, as he hears the sound of the sharpening scythe, he joins in fancy the frightened watchers as they endeavor to shut the door against the unseen but urgent visitor. When the religious sister appears at the door of the death chamber and makes the sign indicating the triumph of the death angel we feel that we are on the very borders of the other world. The play meets the test of emotional response. Has Brieux "done it" with *The Red Robe?* He certainly has, so far as the intellect at least is concerned. Early in the play Brieux indicates the fundamental thought of the play: "The French magistracy is not

[1] *The Technique of the One-Act Play,* B. Roland Lewis. John W. Luce & Co., Boston.

[2] *The Craftsmanship of the One-Act Play,* Percival Wilde. Little, Brown, & Company, Boston.

[3] *An Introduction to Drama,* Hubbell & Beaty. The Macmillan Company, New York.

[4] *Dramatic Technique,* George Pierce Baker. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston.

venal . . . But a large number of them are ready to make concessions and to compromise if it is a matter of being agreeable either to the influential elector, or to the deputy, or to the ministry which dispenses places and favor. Universal suffrage is the God and tyrant of magistrates." Starting with this thesis the author proceeds with merciless directness ending with a Q. E. D. that has all the logic of a mathematical or geometrical demonstration:—"Now look at your work, all you wicked judges; of an innocent man you almost made a criminal, and of an honest woman, of a mother, you have made a murderess." What about the emotions? The play is not without an emotional appeal. Whatever the nationality of the reader or auditor he feels a tugging at the heart as he sees the ponderous machinery of "Justice" crushing the innocent as well as the guilty. To a French audience the play undoubtedly produced the desired emotional effect; to a foreign auditor or reader unacquainted with French judicial procedure the emotional appeal must lie largely in the universal element of the play,—Injustice, whether within or without a court, trampling on the innocent in the sacred name of Justice.

We believe that questions such as these are free from the taint of dogmatism. Each is an inquiry intended to elicit information. Each is free from the slightest desire to lay down a critical test. If the reader or professor or critic can draw up a better set of questions, let him by all means do so. Why ask any questions? Why not drop a play once for all after seeing or reading it? Probably ninety-five persons out of a hundred do precisely this thing; they spend an evening more or less pleasantly, and promptly forget what they have seen and heard. But the newspaper man and the professor cannot adopt this "easiest way"; they must write a critique for their newspaper, they must talk about the play to their classes. Both the critic and the professor must express an opinion about the play, they must approve it or condemn it or stigmatize it as unworthy of serious criticism. We see no reason why either the critic or the professor should descend to dogmatism or pedantry; they ought to work harmoniously and along similar

lines. If professors are pedants and bigots they deserve the lashing which they are receiving. But are they pedants? We hope not! Are they necessarily antediluvians and cave dwellers? Emphatically, no!

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Gaehde, *Das Theater*, Teubner, Leipzig.

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Dekker, *Mermaid Series*, Vizetelly & Co., London.

CREATIVE SOURCES

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Chapter I

ORIGIN OF THE DRAMA

The anthropologist is peculiarly fitted to trace drama to its source. He investigates prehistoric man, he studies the customs of still existing uncivilized races, he observes the baby in its cradle, he notes the prehistoric drawings in the caves of southern France and Spain where one hundred and fifty thousand years ago a race of vanished Western Europeans recorded in colors and symmetrical lines their crude emotions.

From this extensive field of observation he is able to make certain deductions which have scientific value; one of these, of special value in this opening chapter of the Story of the Drama, is the discovery that the origin of man and the origin of drama are inseparably linked; this connecting link is human emotion and the instinctive need of finding an outlet for this emotional urge. It is interesting to note how this conclusion of the anthropologist coincides with that of the dramatic critics, even of those who are absolutely lacking in anthropological lore. All the recent manuals of dramatic criticism make "emotional appeal" the real test of a successful play. The intellectualists may dissent; they may claim that it is a degradation of drama to put the emotional element above the intellectual; nevertheless the crowd still turns to the play which offers a good laugh or a good cry. The emotionalists tell with glee of two humble English girls who were in the top gallery of a cheap London theater where a sob play was getting in its full work. One of the girls was rocking back and forth in such violent grief that her companion was alarmed: "Don't cry, Harriet, it is only a play," said she by way of consolation; "Shut up! Can't you see that I'm having a good time?" was the fierce reply.

Whether we like it or not critics are telling us that the groundlings crowded the Globe Theatre not to trace the sources of Shakespeare's plots, not to discuss the question whether it would really be possible for a ship to land on the coast of Bohemia, but rather to see Shylock foiled and Iago jailed.

The scientists trace primitive man back to the period when he was a mere creature of instinct, the instinct to hunt, to fight, to perpetuate his species. They tell us that intellect played very little part in these instinctive actions; in the course of time experience taught this emotional creature that the man who planned his actions usually got the better of those who did not plan. Thence arose the reflective, the intellectual side of his nature, in very rudimentary form at first. The scientist reënforces his argument by reminding us that even today the instincts, the emotions, are the primary urge which actuate the undisciplined man; first the desire,—the love, the hate, then the remonstrance or the approval of the intellect. That even in this late day the intellect is still secondary and vastly inferior as a force in deciding the actions of many men, is sadly evident to anyone who reads the daily newspapers.

Primitive man passed through terrific struggles in his fight for existence,—fights with nature, fights with his fellow-man, fights in which the emotions of love, hate, desire, jealousy, ambition were the driving force. With his emotional nature boiling over, the impulsive man sought an adequate outlet; his spiritual urge inevitably found expression in a form which was essentially dramatic; as one scientist succinctly puts it: "Every race, tribe, clan or people known to anthropologists has developed some emotional outlet or release,—many of them unique in character, and the process or method of the release is always dramatic in its character."

Thus far we have considered drama as first appearing among primitive emotional men. But the question at once arises, what about the developed intellectual man of modern times? Is there no rational element in Tennyson's *Becket*, in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, in the Morality *Everyman*, in Soph-

ocles' *Antigone?* "A question not to be asked," as Falstaff said to Prince Hal in connection with a very different matter. The modern man of developed intellect has his own problems quite as pressing as those of his emotional ancestor. The primitive man asked anxiously: "When do we eat?" The modern Hamlet paces back and forth putting to himself the age long question: "To be or not to be?" In the beginning the "morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." That was a lyric song, an emotional shout; both were emotionally dramatic; today a Monna Vanna must choose between her own honor and that of others; that is intellectual drama. From whatever angle we consider our common humanity,—the emotional, the intellectual, the spiritual, we may have drama: witness our Penitential Psalms, our Hamlet, our Book of Job.

Why do we go to a play? Why not live out our little drama within the solitary walls of our own shelter? Because we cannot. Aristotle in seven pregnant words uttered twenty-three hundred years ago tells us why: "Man is by nature a political animal." The primitive man was communal; he instinctively formed his family, joined his clan, his tribe. His emotions, however individual, were common to every member of his tribe or clan. From the beginning the themes handled in dramatic form have been of communal interest. It is true that the lyric poet, as compared with the dramatic, may pour out his own personal joys or sorrows, but it is surprising how some of these personal lyrical cries have been made the communal cry of myriads of the poet's fellow men. Many of the greatest hymns of the churches were originally the individual cries of devout souls. The personal lyrical cry may or may not become universal; drama has always assumed an audience, has always been universal in its appeal, even though it seemed personal. Prometheus, though a god, is paying an awful penalty for his desire to benefit the human race; Antigone is of royal parentage, but she has to decide with every Greek citizen between the law of the king and the higher law of heaven; Monna Vanna is the wife of an Italian prince, but even she

must choose between the sacrifice of personal honor and the sacrifice of the honor of all the women of her town.

We go to the theater, in a word, to find an outlet for our own emotional nature; we find it in the contemplation of human beings who are passing through experiences essentially like our own, though in detail their circumstances seem far remote from our own. There are Clytemnestras, Antigones, Medeas, Hamlets, Lears, Othellos in every audience. We weep with those that weep, we rejoice with those that righteously rejoice; we laugh the cobwebs from our brain as we follow the adventures of Falstaff, we wash away the petty carking cares of our own spiritual or æsthetic natures, as we listen to Lear's whispered sob over his Cordelia's form: "I might have saved her, now she's gone forever." We go to the theater because, if we are wise enough, clear-sighted enough, we see ourselves projected in the form of others on the stage.

The primitive man expressed his own feelings in song and mimetic dance; his example proved contagious; then, when others danced and mimicked, he looked on with joy, for next to the personal pleasure of expressing his own feelings was the instinctive love of seeing imitations well performed by others.

Theatergoers have changed but little since the crude theatricals of their aboriginal ancestors. In the theater of today we are not allowed to give audible or visible expression to our joys and sorrows; but we go to see a great artist do the expressing for us; we weep with Lear, we laugh with Falstaff, but we weep because Lear is a human father in distress, and our turn or the turn of someone dear to us may come next; we laugh with Falstaff, but the fat knight is simply committing on a huge scale the follies that we ourselves or our next door neighbors are committing every day.

CHAPTER II

IS THERE A LAW OF THE DRAMA?

FOR many years dramatic critics have been searching for the particular element which differentiates a play from other branches of literature, a full-length play from a novel, a one-act play from a short story. We feel, instinctively, that there is a distinction, but when we attempt to show the exact difference, to point out the element or elements which differentiate a play from a novel we discover a marked divergence of opinion. A true criterion, if we can find it, would indicate the one element or the various elements which we find in dramas but do not find in novels or short stories. If we say that we have discovered this criterion and critics are able to prove that the element which, we claim, distinguishes drama from novels is found also in novels, we have evidently failed in our quest; the most we have a right to assert under such conditions is that, though many or most plays meet the test of our criterion, few novels or short stories do so. This restricted discovery may be of value even though it fail in universality.

The theory that has found the most general recognition and the readiest acceptance in this country is the so-called *Law of the Drama* formulated by the late Ferdinand Brunetière in 1894 and reprinted in the English translation of Philip M. Hayden, by the Dramatic Museum of Columbia University, New York, 1914. Ferdinand Brunetière, a famous French critic, was born in 1849, and died in 1906. He was educated in various French schools—The Lycée Louis-le-Grand, the Louvre, the École des Beaux-arts. He failed in his entrance examination at the École Normale, but his studious habits later gained him a position as teacher in the same École Normale which had previously refused to admit him as a student.

Soon after 1890 he began to teach at the Sorbonne and in 1893 he received the distinguished honor of election to the French Academy. In his earlier days in Paris he was a constant attendant at the theater. He produced a long list of important treatises on various phases of dramatic criticism. The work which is best known in this country is his *Law of the Drama* (*La Loi du Théâtre*) published in 1894 as the preface to Noël and Stoullig's *Les Annales du Théâtre et de la Musique*. This preface is a final revision and extension of a course of lectures which he had given a couple of years previously.

What then is Brunetière's famous pronouncement? It will be most clearly understood by a quotation from Hayden's translation: "In drama or farce, what we ask of the theatre is the spectacle of a will striving towards a goal, and conscious of the means which it employs." This, according to Brunetière, distinguishes a play from a novel or a lyric composition. In a play we have a "will striving towards a goal and conscious of the means which it employs." In a novel we do not have such a will. A novel is the exact antithesis of a play. "The drama and the novel are not the same thing; or rather, each is exactly the opposite of the other." This is certainly important if true. But is it true? We shall omit criticism of the theory until we have explained it more fully in Brunetière's own words as translated by Hayden.

Under this theory we may, says Brunetière, differentiate tragedy, comedy and farce. We must ascertain the particular obstacle against which the will is striving. "If these obstacles are recognized to be insurmountable, or reputed to be so, it is *tragedy*." "Change once more the nature of the obstacle, equalize, at least in appearance, the conditions of the struggle, bring together two opposing wills,—this is *comedy*." "But instead of locating the obstacle in an opposing will, conscious and mistress of its acts, in a social convention or in the fatality of destiny, let us locate it in the irony of fortune, or in the ridiculous aspect of prejudice, or again in the disproportion between the means and the end,—that is *farce*."

Here then we have the famous "conflict theory" of Brune-

tière—a will opposing an obstacle of some sort. Let us test his method of differentiating tragedy, comedy and farce. "It is only necessary to consider the particular obstacle against which the will struggles. If these obstacles are recognized to be insurmountable or reputed to be so,—it is tragedy." Perhaps the spectacle of the early English king who forbade the tide to advance may be tragic,—his was certainly a will struggling against an obstacle recognized by all others but himself as insurmountable. But what about Mrs. Partington's attempt to dry up the Atlantic Ocean with her mop? Is that tragedy? Possibly, but the world has always laughed at it as a supremely good joke. Does not Mrs. Partington's heroic effort fall equally well under Brunetière's own definition of farce,—"the disproportion between the means and the end,"—the mop and the attempt to mop up the ocean? The act of the king and the endeavor of Mrs. Partington may be considered as either laughable or tragic,—as farce or tragedy, by Brunetière's own definition. In both cases there is a "will striving toward a goal and conscious of the means which it employs." Both are tragedy, both are farce as defined by Brunetière.

Now let us consider his definition of comedy:—"Equalize, at least in appearance, the conditions of the struggle, bring together two opposing wills,—this is comedy." Is the spectacle of two opposing wills always comedy? How about the tragedy of Prometheus, a Titan, defying a god,—Zeus? What about the opposing wills of Medea and her husband Jason? Need we cite Antigone and King Creon? Could there be a more potentially tragic theme than two clashing wills: child against father,—Lear and his children, wife against husband,—Nora against Torvald, subject against ruler,—Tell against Gessler? All three definitions of Brunetière:—tragedy, comedy, farce, break down when put to the test.

In his *Études Critiques* Brunetière sets forth more explicitly his theory of conflict as the essence of drama. "Drama is a representation of the will of man in conflict with the mysterious powers or natural forces which limit and belittle us; it is one of us thrown living upon the stage, there to struggle

against fatality, against social law, against one of his fellow-mortals, against himself, if need be, against the ambitions, the interests, the prejudices, the folly, the malevolence of those who surround him." A formidable list this, arousing an uncomfortable feeling that few of us mortals can escape a clash.

In another passage Brunetière represents mankind as no longer waiting for the attack of the enemy but as boldly forcing the fighting: "The theatre in general is nothing but the place for the development of the human will, attacking the obstacles opposed to it by destiny, fortune, or circumstances." This "Law" is sometimes called the "obstacle theory." A conflict of this kind may be absolutely impersonal though none the less serious. It is the poor boy or girl struggling against odds for a college education; it is the man with a physical handicap, trying to earn a livelihood; it is the woman unjustly accused of a moral offence and compelled to face social ostracism. They must fight for their existence; they may go down in the struggle, they may emerge victorious. It is sometimes harder to fight these impersonal foes than to face a personal adversary.

Henry Arthur Jones also gives a belligerent twist to the definition: "The theatre is nothing but the place where a man finds himself up against something and attacks it."

Brunetière deserves the credit of developing and elaborating a principle which had been recognized by eminent critics long before his day. Voltaire asserted that every scene in a play should represent a combat; Coleridge insisted that accidents have no place in tragedy because "in the tragic the free will of man is the first cause"; Goethe, Hegel, Schlegel, all emphasized conflict as an essential of tragedy. Coming down to more recent times, Robert Louis Stevenson said: "A good serious play must be founded on one of the passionate *cruces* of life, where duty and inclination come nobly to the grapple." Brunetière has ample critical support for his insistence upon conflict as an essential of drama. It is however noticeable that none of these men, with the exception of Goethe, attempt to confine conflict exclusively to drama. Goethe seems to align

himself on the side of Brunetière; Brander Matthews represents him as saying that "while the hero of a novel might be passive the hero of a play must be active," since, "all events oppose him, and he either clears and removes every obstacle out of his path, or else becomes their victim." Notice that Goethe does not exclude conflict from novels; he simply says that the hero of a novel "might be" passive. No valid objection can be made to this concession to novels. Professor Matthews was right in citing the hero of the famous novel *Gil Blas* as a drifter rather than a fighter, but to say that all plays contain a conflict and that no novels contain a conflict; to assert that: "The drama and the novel are not the same thing; or rather, each is exactly the opposite of the other," and to take Beaumarchais' *Marriage of Figaro* as the sole type of play and Lesage's *Gil Blas* as the only possible kind of novel is dogmatism, pure and simple.

Professor Brander Matthews is generally credited with introducing Brunetière to the attention of American scholars and with giving him extensive vogue through his many books and essays. To the day of his death Dr. Matthews seems to have accepted this "dictum" as universal, flawless, unassailable. In his *A Study of the Drama*, he says: "The credit for declaring this "law" thus clearly, and of applying it so as to bring out the special quality of the drama, and to make plain the fundamental difference between a play and a novel, is undoubtedly due to Brunetière." In another passage he affirms that Brunetière "declared a principle by which the drama as a whole is differentiated absolutely from the epic and prose-fiction." The only reasonable interpretation of these sentences is that dramas contain conflicts and therein they differ from novels,—which do not contain conflicts. Not simply *some* plays contain conflicts, but *all* plays contain them. "In every successful play, modern or ancient," says Dr. Matthews, "we shall find this clash of contending desires, this assertion of the human will against strenuous opposition of one kind or another."

For about twenty years American critics were under the

bondage of this "proclamation." The positive utterances of the great French critic and the unqualified endorsement by the eminent American authority, established the standard for the lesser critics. It became the proper thing to find a conflict in every drama.

In 1912, eighteen years after Brunetière had published his *Law of the Drama* another competent dramatic critic, the late William Archer, in his handbook *Play-Making* challenged the "edict" and cited a number of standard plays in which he failed to discover any conflict. Since that memorable attack of William Archer other critics have taken a fling at the "law." Clayton Hamilton, Archibald Henderson, Barrett H. Clark, Professor George Pierce Baker have written sensibly on the mooted subject. The present opinion concerning the "decree" seems to be about as follows: It is not universal for two reasons: There are plays without conflicts; there are novels with conflicts. Both assertions seem susceptible of proof. Either, if proven, deprives the "law" of its authority and universality. To show that novels may contain conflicts it is simply necessary to cite Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* with its soul struggle of Anna torn between her guilty passion and her maternal love.

In his attack on the "assumption" Mr. Archer says: "The difficulty about this definition is that while it describes the matter of a good many dramas, it does not lay down any true differentia—any characteristic common to all drama, and possessed by no other form of fiction. Many of the greatest plays in the world can with difficulty be brought under the formula, while the majority of romances and other stories come under it with ease." Admirably and conclusively spoken. But when Mr. Archer cites his list of plays in refutation we find ourselves in the anomalous position of admitting that he has demolished the "law," while we are forced to reject many of the examples which he cites. He finds no struggle in the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus, in the *Oedipus* of Sophocles, in Shakespeare's *Othello*, in Ibsen's *Ghosts*. It can readily be shown that in three of these plays,—*Oedipus*, *Othello*, *Ghosts*, there is a definite struggle. *Oedipus* "finds himself up against

something and attacks it." So does Mrs. Alving in *Ghosts*. Othello is surely struggling against the "malevolence" of Iago. What is Oedipus "up against"? The task of discovering the murderer of his predecessor. Does he "attack" it? Archer says he does not: "Oedipus, in fact, does not struggle at all." How any critic who reads the savage altercation between Oedipus and the priest Teiresias, who refuses to give Oedipus the desired information, can fail to find a struggle on the part of Oedipus to solve the riddle of his birth, is beyond comprehension. In *Ghosts* Mr. Archer says that: "Oswald doubtless wishes to live, and his mother desires that he should live; but this will for life can not be the differentia that makes *Ghosts* a drama." The leading character of this play is not Oswald but his mother. If ever any woman "found herself up against something" it was Mrs. Alving. She finds herself with a young son, whose well-being she is called upon to protect against the danger of physical and moral corruption from a libertine father. Does she "attack" it? Her whole life from the birth of the babe is a desperate though losing fight against heredity and moral contagion. Of Othello, Mr. Archer says that "there is no struggle, no conflict, between him and Iago." No conflict between Othello and Iago? Was there ever a devoted husband who would not resist in some way sinister insinuations against his wife's honor? It is true that at the first suggestion of his wife's infidelity Othello does not kill or even strike Iago but note the flaring of his temper when Iago's devilish hintings first penetrate Othello's mind: "*By Heaven, I'll know thy thoughts.*" Iago has evidently struck fire, for he replies, "*Oh, beware, my lord, of jealousy.*" Archer is certainly wrong when he says "neither Othello nor Desdemona makes the smallest fight."

It is not difficult to discover conflict in *Oedipus*, in *Ghosts*, and in *Othello*. When, however, we pass to Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* we find ourselves baffled in the attempt to bring the play under the "rule." Archer says of this play: "There is no more struggle between Clytemnestra and Agamemnon than there is between the spider and the fly who walks into his net."

Archer is, we believe, justified in this assertion. Agamemnon is absolutely unconscious of the plot which his wife Clytemnestra has formed against him. She welcomes her "sweet lord" on his return. She spreads royal purple tapestry from his chariot to the palace door, she professes gratitude to heaven for her husband's return. He enters the palace unsuspectingly and is felled by the murderous ax. He is not "struggling" against anything. He is "up against something," but he is not "attacking" this something, because he has no suspicion of his danger. We think Mr. Archer has won his plea in the case of Agamemnon. If it be true, as we think it is, that there is no struggle in the *Agamemnon,* Mr. Archer has disproved the universality of the famous Law of Brunetière.

Had Mr. Archer remained satisfied with his victory it would have been better for his reputation as a critic. But he proceeded to substitute a dogma of his own for the one he had destroyed. "It is not true," says he, "that every play contains a conflict, but it is true that every play contains a crisis." "What, then, is the essence of drama, if conflict be not it? What is the common quality of themes, scenes, and incidents, which we recognize as specifically dramatic? Perhaps we shall scarcely come nearer to a helpful definition than if we say that the essence of drama is *crisis.* A play is a more or less rapidly developing crisis in destiny or circumstance, and a dramatic scene is a crisis within a crisis, clearly furthering the ultimate event."

Mr. Archer was at once subjected to the same searching criticism as that which he had passed on Brunetière. Does every play contain a crisis? Critics were not slow to challenge the validity of the crisis theory as well as that of the conflict dogma. Mr. Archibald Henderson in his *The Changing Drama* disposes, in one trenchant sentence, of both theories as universal laws: "One need only turn to the fertile and original dramas of our own time in order to discover satisfactory examples of the successful stage play which fall outside the categories of both conflict and crisis; and a backward glance will disclose not a few plays of high rank, the work of men of dif-

ferent times, and differing nationalities, excluded from these categories."

For the benefit of those who wish to form an independent judgment on this mooted question, we name a few of the plays which Professor Henderson cites as disproving the universality of both the conflict and the crisis theory. He finds no conflict in Schnitzler's *Living Hours*, Maeterlinck's *The Blind*, and Gorky's *Lower Depths*. He fails to find a supreme crisis in Strindberg's *The Dream Play*, Barker's *The Madras House*, Galsworthy's *The Pigeon*.

Professor George Pierce Baker in his recent book *Dramatic Technique* joins the ranks of those who reject both Brunetière's "law" and Archer's crisis theory. He says: "Conflict covers a large part of drama, but not all of it." He repudiates the crisis theory because Mr. Archer has not defined crisis "and we have defined without defining." Professor Baker substitutes a theory of his own which he thinks will stand the test of practical application. He considers emotion an essential of drama: "accurately conveyed emotion is the great fundamental in all good drama." Again and again in his book he insists upon emotional response as the test of a play. "A play exists to create emotional response in an audience."

As yet, no one has attempted to refute Professor Baker's supreme test of the effectiveness of a play. If a play leaves an audience unmoved it has failed as a play, regardless of its technique. The great plays of the world, *Antigone*, *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*,—a thousand others, pass this test. If emotional response is the true test of Hamlet why is it not an equally valid test of *Abie's Irish Rose?* Scarcely one competent dramatic critic has ventured to defend this play, but the fact that it ran for five consecutive years is sufficient proof that it aroused "emotional response in an audience." What will the "emotional response" advocates do with this play? Professor Baker failed to include it in the list of dramas from which he quotes in his stately volume.

The fact is that conflict, crisis, emotional response, are all very desirable qualities in a play. Probably at least ninety-five

per cent of plays do contain a conflict; the number without a crisis is comparatively small; a play which leaves the audience cold is a failure. We may reasonably expect a conflict in a play because our daily lives are charged with struggle,—conflict within and without; we welcome a crisis because we are all familiar with crises in our own lives. On the other hand plays without conflict and without crisis need not surprise us, because in our daily life we are not always conscious of conflict, and the supreme crises also are exceptional.

Professor Baker seems to have proved his case in insisting upon emotion as an essential of a play. Few of us attend the theater primarily for mental stimulation; most of us go to secure relief from the incessant mental wear and tear of business life and professional cares. Emotion first, intellect second, is the approved order according to the new theorists of the theater. The intellectuals may not like it, but even so humble a play as *Abie's Irish Rose* shows that the emotional test has the voice of the common people in its favor.

Chapter III

WHY DO WE LAUGH?

Why do we laugh? The physiologist has an answer, the psychologist has another or rather many others.

The physiologist says laughter is purely a muscular reaction to tickling; a "ticklish" person laughs when we excite his muscles. Hitherto it has been the accepted doctrine that man is the only animal that laughs. A London professor offers a single exception to the rule; he claims the hyena is the only animal except man that indulges in laughter. "Wrong, absolutely wrong," says the head of the department of Psychology in an American university, "cows, horses, and monkeys laugh, and the most obvious laughter in the animal kingdom is that of the frog."

It is a significant fact that many, perhaps all races of men have traditional comic characters; the Greeks had their Thersites; the Romans their Maccus and Bucco; the Italians their Pulchinella and Scaramuccia; the African tribes, the American Indians of today have their own traditional funny men; the Indians of the southwest call their fun-makers "Koshares," which in the Indian language means "delight-maker."

The physiologists have gone minutely into the physical manifestations of laughter. Darwin, with a solemnity which to the non-scientific reader may seem laughable, describes the facial expression of a laugher: "A well-marked naso-labial fold is formed, which runs from the wing of each nostril to the corner of the mouth; and this fold is often doubled in old persons." A professor, more recent than Darwin, tells us how laughter begins and ends:—"It begins in a puckering of features and ends in a jelly-like contortion of the whole body."

Laughter, as thus defined, seems woefully lacking in æs-

thetic qualities; those "naso-labial folds," this "puckering of features," this "jelly-like contortion of the whole body" comes as a great surprise to those of us who have laughed all our lives without studying our faces in a mirror. If we are unable to watch ourselves when we laugh we can at least study the first laugher who comes within our vision. We can watch for the preliminary "pucker," followed by the telltale "naso-labial fold," and ending with the "jelly-like contortions of the whole body." If we wonder how an exceedingly thin person could meet the "jelly-like contortion" test, we need simply to recall that according to another learned professor "thin dried-up individuals rarely laugh." Is laughter beautiful? "No" says a London professor, "Laughter, like tears, is ugly,—being made up of grimaces and contortions." 2969

As explained by one of these modern scientists there are involved in every emotional response activities of ductless glands,—thyroid, pituitary, and others. When these glands are stimulated they produce changes in the chemical composition of the blood, the elasticity of the blood vessels, and bring about many complex physiological activities and changes. These in turn act psychologically.

The psychologists have been working over the problem since the days of Aristotle. Each seems determined to find a single ultimate mental origin of laughter. Each writes positively and plausibly, yet the thoughtful reader can usually adduce examples of genuine laughter which do not come under any explanation thus far offered.

Perhaps the nearest approach to agreement among investigators is the assignment of "incongruity" as the ultimate cause of laughter. This theory had its origin in Aristotle's assertion that the "ludicrous is a subdivision of the ugly." It is a departure from the norm of the æsthetic. This is a fairly useful definition. It explains the laughter caused by a good pun,—a distortion of language; it explains the merriment caused by a very small man trying to carry a very heavy woman across a muddy street; it explains the gentleman who unwittingly sits upon his hat instead of a chair. At once the criticism suggests

itself that a departure from the æsthetic norm may be pathetic, —a King,—a Lear, stripped of his kingship and shivering in the rain. But Aristotle hastens to add that the incongruity must be a distortion not accompanied by pain. He cites as an illustration the comic mask with its distorted features which are ugly yet carry no suggestion of pain.

We may, therefore, assign "incongruity or contrast unaccompanied by pain" as one of the legitimate causes of laughter. That it is not the sole cause of laughter as some psychologists insist, is sufficiently shown by the fact that the laugh or the joyous smile of a baby as it looks up into its mother's face can with extreme difficulty, if at all, be traced to any feeling of incongruity in the infant's mind.

A famous definition of the source of laughter is that formulated by Hobbes, the seventeenth century English philosopher. He insists that our laughter implies a feeling of superiority to the person at whom we laugh: "The passion of laughter is nothing else but sudden glory arising from a sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmity of others, or with our own formerly." The word "glory" meant in Hobbes' day "pride" or "boastfulness." Reduced to modern language he seems to say that when we laugh at a person we are saying to ourselves, "How absurd! I wouldn't do or say such a thing." That may explain our laughter at a conceited man, or a woman wearing a grotesquely unbecoming hat, but does it explain our laughter at one of Charles Lamb's exquisite puns? Aristotle's definition of "a departure from the norm" may explain our laughter at the unexpected verbal twist, but when we gleefully repeat the pun it is a little difficult to see how it implies superiority on our own part.

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Kant, in his *Critique of Judgment* finds the cause of laughter in the reaction from disappointment. "Laughter is an affection arising from the sudden transformation of strained expectation into nothing." (Das Lachen ist ein Affekt aus der plötzlichen Verwandlung einer gespannten Erwartung in nichts.) This may explain the reaction when a long-dreaded

"ghost" resolves itself into a bed-sheet swinging on the clothes line. It may also explain the smile which comes over the face of the passenger who barely squeezes through the closing door of a subway train. His "strained expectation" of being left behind has been "transformed into nothing." We can accept Kant's explanation as covering only a strained expectation which resolves itself happily and is thus "transformed into nothing." It is worth noting that Kant's explanation of the cause of laughter is nothing more than an expansion of Aristotle's statement in *The Rhetoric*: "We laugh as a natural reaction from disappointment." So, too, those who find the cause of laughter in "incongruity" are harking back to the same ancient authority, Aristotle; in his *Poetics* he says, "We are amused by perceiving some defect or ugliness which is not painful or destructive."

When we go into the matter more deeply we are bewildered by the variety and the diversity of the causes assigned by modern philosophers. The simplest and most reasonable seems to be that of Darwin: "Laughter seems primarily to be the expression of mere joy or happiness." That would adequately describe the laugh of a little child. "Oh, no," replies a more recent investigator, "the really happy man never laughs. Laughter is the mask of a hard or selfish mind." And by the way, according to this same philosopher, that is the way a hyena laughs: "the hyena's laugh like that of many humans, is a snarl."

Still another theory offered by a famous American professor is that "Laughter is the antidote to sympathy." According to this theory, nature has given us laughter as a protection against an excessive indulgence in sympathy. We are contemplating a situation which appeals so profoundly to our emotions that we are exceedingly depressed. Nature comes to our rescue by causing us to laugh heartily. The effect is both physiological and psychological. When we laugh the rate of breathing is increased and the flow of blood to the heart and the brain is stimulated. The psychological effect follows:— the train of sympathetic and depressed thought is broken up;

we cease, temporarily at least, to dwell upon the depressing conditions. This theory,—"Laughter is the antidote to sympathy" might explain the strange but recorded phenomenon of a mother laughing uproariously at her daughter who was passing through a period of great physical suffering, but will it explain the laughter aroused by the following true incident: "A child was about to be christened. As the parents were carrying the infant down the aisle to the waiting clergyman, the child was making the edifice reëcho with its wailing. "Name this child," said the clergyman. "Aurora," said the fond father. It seems a little difficult to apply the "sympathy antidote" theory to the laughter which swept through the audience.

"Laughter" says another professor, "is the expression of vicarious triumph." That, according to this philosopher, is why some persons laugh when a man steps on a banana skin. It is a little difficult for the unphilosophical laugher to realize that his amusement is "indulgence in vicariously enjoyed triumph"; but it is very simple when it is explained in words of one syllable, "we triumph in the fact that we did not slip and fall."

Herbert Spencer believed that laughter is merely an overflow of nervous energy. He thinks that this theory explains the laughter of fat men. They laugh at the slightest provocation. Thin dried-up individuals rarely laugh because they have so little surplus energy. If the reader laughs at this theory let him test his weight by stepping on the scales.

And here is another definition: "Laughter is the termination of a strain, the end of a struggle." How that merciless old quizzer Socrates would have enjoyed mauling the propounder of this theory. "Come now, Professor," he would have said, "tell me more plainly and less learnedly exactly what you mean; for I, for one, do not understand you. Do you mean that when a boxer takes the count on a knockout he laughs? The knockout, as I understand, is the end of a struggle. Or do you mean that when a man has strained a tendon in his leg and after long medical treatment is cured to the extent that he can walk with a crutch, he laughs? For that, if I get your

meaning, is the termination of a strain." "Socrates, you beast, you always put the worst interpretation on my words." "That I may not do so again, oh Thrasymachus, please speak more simply and less learnedly."

No discussion of the causes of laughter would be complete without a reference to the standard treatise by Bergson, *Le Rire* (English translation by Macmillan, N. Y.) Bergson maintains that laughter is critical, not sympathetic. The purpose of laughter is to reprove or correct the eccentric person who violates the social code. The fear of incurring the contemptuous laughter of his peers keeps him bound within the fetters which society imposes. This conception of laughter as incompatible with emotion or sympathy is characteristic of the French mind as compared with that of the English. The French comedian laughs objectively at his victim; the English comic writer laughs with him. Molière makes us laugh contemptuously *at* Tartuffe; Shakespeare makes us laugh *with* as well as *at* Falstaff and Dogberry. Many Englishmen who glory in Shakespeare's genial comedy find Molière's merciless excoriations distasteful. Bergson makes the point that we laugh only at that which is human or resembles the human. We laugh at the antics of monkeys because they seem almost human; we do not laugh at the lower animals unless they show some resemblance to humanity. Bergson traces many cases of laughter to observed instances of awkwardness, carelessness, and thoughtlessness. We must also admit that these are the causes of countless tragedies in which laughter has no part.

An examination of the current explanations of laughter seems to indicate that the one universal cause has thus far eluded the search. Indeed Professor Wolf, who contributes the article "Laughter" to the new edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* practically gives up the quest by saying:—"It seems unlikely that any uniform explanation will fit all the facts. Everyday language seems to bear witness to the existence of different kinds of laughter, provoked by different kinds of situations."

There has been much discussion over the chronological order

of the rise of tragedy and comedy. Some writers regard them as simultaneous in origin; some are certain that comedy arose later than tragedy; others who have studied laughter from the biological standpoint are convinced that comedy as a form of drama was prior to the heavier expression of tragedy; this group of biologists claims that it is supported by the discoveries of anthropologists who have found that one of the oldest forms of dramatic expression,—mimicry, was prevailingly humorous rather than tragic. Those who believe that comedy and tragedy arose simultaneously insist that they have essentially the same basis; they differ in expression simply because they are set in a different key.

Many centuries ago a philosopher said "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." It is fortunate for him that he is not living today. The philosophers would be after him with their cudgels. You merry men whose sense of humor has helped you over many a trying place in life, you men who carry sunshine into gloomy corners, who coax a smile upon the face of grief, the new psychology has taken your measure and has neatly labeled you with a brand-new tag. You are suffering from a bad case of "inferiority-complex" which means, in plain English, "If you have a very low opinion of yourself, you obtain relief either by laughing at yourself with others, or by laughing at others with yourself."

What a deadly weapon an "inferiority-complex" is in the hands of a new psychologist. When you are cornered in an argument tell your opponent that he has an "inferiority-complex." If he has a sense of humor he has an "inferiority-complex." If he has no sense of humor he has an "inferiority-complex"! (A recent writer on laughter puts it in this form:—"Those who have the most pronounced inferiority-complex never have any sense of humor.")

"Audible merriment is on the way to disappearance. The time is coming when men, being evolved enough to see their way through all incongruities, will cease to laugh." "The men of the future will know too much to laugh at anything." "The laugh is going fast. We have passed from the age of Shake-

speare to that of Ibsen." "Jokes are kept alive by professionals who are like doctors administering oxygen. But the life of laughter cannot be saved. War and laughter will depart hand in hand, and in the future sober period of scientific and social thought there will probably be museums which will preserve our jokes and comic strips in much the same manner that we keep the memorials of the stone age." We are heading straight for a laughless age. The future man will never laugh; at the most he will smile. "Laughter is the expression of a coarse emotion, which, as culture increases, is refined to the form of a smile. Smiling is simply a refined and secondary development of laughter." Perhaps we should dismiss these professional vagaries with a smile; it would of course be very unbecoming to laugh an old-fashioned hearty laugh.

If however we begin a discussion of smiles we are in for another chapter. "I call the smile the coin of social exchange" says one modernist. Here is a chance for an ambitious Ph. D. candidate; why not write a dissertation on "Mona Lisa's smile examined from the standpoint of the coin of social exchange"?

Chapter IV

COMEDY *versus* FARCE

The literary world has never recovered from Aristotle's failure to keep his promise to discuss comedy. His treatment of tragedy is still the basis of modern dramatic criticism on that subject. In the *Poetics* he promised to discuss comedy as well as tragedy. Possibly he carried out his promise; if so, we have lost that portion of his treatise. His famous definition of tragedy still stands the test even when applied to modern tragedy, but in the absence of the promised definition of comedy we are still floundering in a morass of divergent and inconsistent explanations. Critics who attempt exact definitions often destroy their own work by citing illustrations which obviously contradict the definition. We shall see an example of this when we come to Brander Matthews' attempt to define high comedy.

We do not even know with certainty what the word "comedy" means in the original Greek. The last three letters of the word seem clearly the equivalent of the Greek word for "song." The difficulty lies in the interpretation of the first three letters; they may come from a Greek word meaning "a village" or they may be derived from another Greek word meaning "a band of revelers." Comedy means, therefore, either the "village song" or the "song of the revelers." By the "village song" is meant that comedy was too coarse for the refined ears of city dwellers and was therefore confined to the less cultivated rustic villages. The defenders of the meaning "song of the revelers" have in mind a procession of roisterers who wandered, singing, through the streets of the city after an evening over their cups. This second interpretation has in modern times won greater acceptance than the "village song" theory.

Whatever the real etymology of the word "comedy" there is universal agreement that Greek comedy, like tragedy, had a religious origin in the worship of the god Dionysus. Tragedy, we are told, originated in the Dithyramb,—a primitive song in honor of Dionysus; comedy, according to Aristotle, originated in the Phallic songs,—songs in honor of Dionysus as the god of wine and vegetation.

We cannot trace the history of comedy as far back as the recorded beginnings of tragedy. Though we have no reason to doubt that they both originated in prehistoric times, tragedy was recognized by the state long before comedy was deemed worthy of official notice. Even as late as the fourth century B. C., according to Aristotle's explicit statement, the writers of comedy were as a class regarded as distinctly inferior to the poets who devoted themselves to tragedy.

The Greeks were emphatically of the opinion that no man could write both tragedy and comedy. Nor did they think an actor could possibly excel both as a tragedian and as a comedian. The Romans did not fully accept this creed. Some of the earlier Roman dramatists,—Naevius, for example, third century B. C., attempted both tragedy and comedy. But it is worth noting that Plautus and Terence were exclusively comic writers, and that Seneca confined his dramatic work entirely to tragedies. Molière wrote a tragi-comedy: *Don Garcie de Navarre*, 1661, and in collaboration with Corneille and Quinault, a tragedy-ballad *Psyché*, 1671, but his best work was unquestionably done in comedy. The experience of centuries has shown the fundamental error of the Greek theorists. Shakespeare proved his mastery of both forms of dramatic composition. It is however worth noting that more than one modern critic has hinted that the Shakespearean type of romantic comedy is outgrown. Shakespeare's tragedies have undergone fierce assaults by various schools of criticism, but their perennial vitality is undoubted. In refutation of the ancient theory that an actor could not possibly succeed in both tragedy and comedy we need mention only the incomparable Duse who could electrify an audience in Goldoni's sparkling *Mistress of*

the Inn as well as in the somber *Ghosts* of Ibsen. The great orators of modern times, Moody, Beecher, a host of others have shown conclusively that the sources of laughter and tears lie very close together in the human soul. A great humorist like Bob Burdette could convulse an audience with laughter and then by a deft modulation of the key could melt his hearers to tears. Bret Harte knew well the secret of this double appeal;—read his *The Luck of Roaring Camp* and then turn to *The Outcasts of Poker Flat.*

One of the difficulties in defining comedy is the undoubted fact that the conception of comedy changes from century to century and that contemporary nations differ markedly in their understanding of the comic. What one nation regards as comedy may seem to another an approach to tragedy. The French regard *Tartuffe* as comedy, pure and simple; English critics find in it a tragic element. Modern students often fail to see anything funny in that prince of comic writers,—Aristophanes. To many modern ears the Roman Plautus seems merely a cheap and vulgar buffoon. But we need not go as far back as the ancient Greeks and Romans for our citations of comic writers who fail to capture modern readers. Even the Elizabethan audience laughed over situations and characters which no longer seem humorous to us. To the Elizabethans, fools, cripples, insane persons aroused laughter; to moderns they excite pity. The Elizabethans jeered mercilessly at Shylock and would have made short work of an actor who attempted to depict him as a tragic character. Those who in modern times saw David Warfield in the rôle were startled into final acceptance of the tragic side of the great usurer.

Coleridge finds the essence of Greek comedy in the deliberate abdication of man's higher nature, in its temporary surrender to the animal element within him. "The sportive ideal consists in the perfect harmony and concord of the higher nature with the animal, as with its ruling principle and its acknowledged master." This theory will, Coleridge thinks, explain psychologically the allusions and scenes in Aristophanes which are intolerable to modern eyes and ears. Revers-

ing the situation Coleridge finds the idea of serious poetry in the subjection of the animal element to man's spiritual nature. "The ideal of earnest poetry consists in the union and harmonious melting down, and fusion of the sensual into the spiritual,—of man as an animal into man as a power of reason and self-government."

A complete list of the minute subdivisions of comedy which dramatic critics have sought to establish would occupy an undue amount of space and would simply confuse the general reader. We find in the list such species as "pure comedy, heroic-comedy, tragi-comedy, comedy-of-masks, high comedy, comedy of manners, comedy-of-humors, romantic comedy, farce-comedy, judicial comedy, non-judicial comedy, comedies of situation, romantic comedies, social comedies, satiric comedies, comedies of character, and natural comedy." The list, though seriously intended, reminds us of the pedantic classification by Polonius: —"Tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene undividable or poem unlimited."

Let us consider first "pure comedy" or "natural comedy." What is comedy? At once we are confronted by a multiplicity of answers. Coleridge called it: "Poetry in unlimited jest." Meredith defines it as "thoughtful laughter." Some critics consider a happy ending the real test of a play. If the ending is unhappy, the play is a tragedy; if happy, the play is a comedy. This criterion may explain the title of Dante's immortal work,—*The Divine Comedy.* A poem which includes hell and purgatory among its component parts seems ill adjusted to our notions of comedy. But Dante himself in his famous *Epistle to Can Grande* whose guest he had been at Verona says, "Comedy beginneth with some adverse circumstances, but its theme hath a happy termination . . . from which it is evident why the present work is called a comedy. For if we consider the theme in its beginning it is horrible and foul, because it is Hell; in its ending, fortunate, desirable, and joyous, because it is Paradise." It is advisable to keep in mind this distinction of Dante, because it furnishes a clue to the modern tendency of dra-

matists to designate as "comedies" plays which seem to the reader or auditor essentially serious. Webster defines comedy as "a drama of light and amusing rather than serious character and typically having a happy ending." The new *Encyclopedia Britannica* defines it as "a type of drama the chief object of which, according to modern notions, is to amuse." Goldsmith called his *She Stoops to Conquer* a comedy; some of his critics said that it was only a farce. This at once brings up the question of the difference between a comedy and a farce.

Perhaps the best method of distinguishing farce from comedy is to state first of all Brander Matthews' practical and workable distinction. In a comedy the characters control the incidents; in a farce the incidents control the characters. "In farce, and again in melodrama, the plot, the situation, the incidents are the controlling factors, and the characters are only what the plot allows them to be or forces them to be." If we apply this test to a so-called "comic" screen picture we see at once that it is farce of the rankest sort; the all important elements of the play are not the living persons, but the inanimate objects,—the custard pies, the wabbly auto, the revolving doors, the sheeted ghost. The pies are thrown at unexpected moments; the wild chase down the hotel corridors begins with no apparent reason; a lion unexpectedly introduced completes the triumph. If the spectator carries away any recollection whatever, it is of the pies, the scurrying down the hotel corridors, the appearance of the lion over the transom. The pie was thrown. Who threw it? We cannot remember. Why was it thrown? We do not know. This is farce, and farce in its lowest form.

If we apply the test to real stage plays, we find it equally satisfactory. A comic actor bumps his head against the scenery. Why? To raise a laugh. He sits on his hat. Why? To raise a very loud laugh. Laughable incidents which do not reveal character, incidents which do not further the development of the action are farcical, not comic. We may, on the other hand, have a character whose personality is so awkward that bumping his head against the scenery or sitting on his hat are

the natural manifestations of his awkwardness or his absent-mindedness. In the case of such a personality, we should be justified in calling the incidents comic, not farcical. A moment's reflection will enable the spectator or reader to determine whether he is laughing at the incidents as incidents or at the character whose personality is such that he would be likely to perform precisely these antics. "In a farce the incidents control the characters; in comedy the characters control the incidents." If this test, as suggested by Brander Matthews, is workable, and we think it is, we need not linger over the more elaborate distinctions between farce and comedy as formulated by the critics. "Comedy as compared with farce, abstains from crude and boisterous jesting, and is marked by some subtlety of dialogue and plot." This writer wisely adds that it is "difficult to draw a hard and fast line of demarcation, there being a distinct tendency to combine the characteristics of farce with those of free comedy."

Undoubtedly the comedy of manners, or high comedy as it is sometimes called, is an important species even though it be a much rarer form than might at first appear. The late Brander Matthews gave an excellent description of the species although one of the examples which he cites is a glaring refutation of his own definition: "In this wise and witty comedy of manners, the action, however serious it may seem, never stiffens into serious drama; and, on the other hand, however amusing it may be, it never relaxes into the robust and boisterous mirth of mere farce." Among the English examples which he cites are: Congreve's *Way of the World* and Sheridan's *School for Scandal*. These fall easily under the definition. But the citation of *Lady Windermere's Fan* as an example seems so unfortunate that we are forced to the conclusion that either the definition is faulty or the citation is erroneous. No one who has seen or read *Lady Windermere's Fan* can doubt for a moment that when Lady Windermere, who has gone, in a moment of pique, to Lord Darlington's room, is on the verge of detection by her husband, we have a potentially serious situation. Discovery of the wife means a dangerous imbroglio for all con-

cerned. The danger is averted by the self-sacrifice of Lady Windermere's mother, who from her place of concealment steps forward as though she were the guilty visitor to Lord Darlington and thereby allows her daughter to escape unnoticed, thus saving her reputation. A happy escape for the daughter, but a costly sacrifice on the part of the mother who apparently confirms her previous reputation as a wanton. Emphatically the action has at this moment "stiffened into serious drama." Laughter over Mrs. Erlynne's self-sacrifice would be sacrilege. Upon the whole we prefer to accept Professor Matthew's definition and his other cited examples, and to assign *Lady Windermere's Fan* to some other category of drama.

There may be some farcical elements in a comedy, there may be some purely comic elements in a farce. Critics have found in Goldsmith's *She Stoops To Conquer* and Sheridan's *The Rivals* farcical elements. Indeed hostile critics not only brought *She Stoops to Conquer* squarely under farce but they insisted that it contains some scenes "too mean even for farce." Dr. Matthews places under the head of farce at least a dozen of Molière's plays, and three of Shakespeare's so-called comedies,—*The Comedy of Errors*, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*. *The Taming of the Shrew* he calls "not only farce, but often farce of a violent type, of the slapstick and knockabout variety." When the comic and the farcical elements are combined it is difficult to determine accurately under which head to classify a given play. Nor does it matter greatly to the casual reader or to the laughter-seeking audience. A laugh's a laugh, to most theater-goers. Only scientists or pedants will carry home a specimen of the laughter and try to determine whether it is "thoughtful laughter" or "the loud laugh that speaks the vacant mind."

To solve the difficulty of clearly distinguishing farce from comedy certain critics here evolved a third species, a hybrid classification,—"farce-comedy." As defined by one of these theorists, a farce-comedy is a "play relying for its comic effect principally upon absurd and grotesque situations and characters, but containing all sorts of higher appeals." It is interest-

ing to note the plays which this editor has included in his volume of farce-comedies: Aristophanes' *The Frogs;* Plautus's *The Menaechmi;* Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew;* Molière's *The Doctor in Spite of Himself;* Gay's *The Beggar's Opera;* Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience;* Pinero's *The Magistrate;* Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest;* France's *The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife.*

Chapter V

TRAGI-COMEDY

Tragi-comedy is, as the name indicates, a frank hybrid. The Greeks did not tolerate a mingling of tragic and comic elements in a play. Tragedies and comedies were to them distinct species. Aristotle insisted that a tragedy must have a tragic ending. When the Greeks wanted a laugh, and nobody laughed oftener or more heartily than the Greeks, they turned to their satyr-dramas and their comedies.

The first appearance of the word tragi-comedy in drama is attributed to Plautus who in the prologue to his *Amphitryon* says:

"Faciam ut conmixta sit haec tragicomoedia."

He means that instead of confining the rôles exclusively to gods and kings he will give slaves a share in the action:—

"Nam me perpetuo facere ut sit comoedia,
Reges quo veniant et di, non par arbitror.
Quid igitur? Quoniam hic servos quoque partis habet,
Faciam sit, proinde ut dixi, tragicomoedia."

Since the innovation was made by a "classic" writer we might have supposed that the classicists of Elizabethan England and France would have accepted it without cavil. But to these scholars "Aristotle" or what they understood to be Aristotle was an infallible authority. Aristotle forbade the combination of the serious and the comic; the Greek dramatists never practiced it; therefore, such a combination was not "classical." Brander Matthews thinks we may note an exception even in Greek tragedy. He cites the "Tragedy" of *Alcestis* as combining both tragic and comic features and as having a happy end-

ing. But he overlooks, as many writers do, the important fact that the *Alcestis* was brought out as the fourth member of a tetralogy, that is, it occupied the place usually filled by a rollicking satyr drama. The *Alcestis* is, therefore, more nearly a tragi-comedy than a tragedy. It certainly cannot be used in refutation of the universal rule of avoiding a happy ending and of never combining the comic and the tragic in a Greek tragedy.

The English and the French classicists scorned the so-called tragi-comedy. Sidney, an uncompromising adherent of the Aristotelian school, scoffed at it as a matching of "hornpipes and funerals." The French classical critics are still abusing Shakespeare for introducing the grave-digger episode into *Hamlet*. Voltaire sneered at Shakespeare as a barbarian and a savage because of his violation of the "classical" rules.

Tragi-comedy has had a hard time in its endeavor to obtain a foothold. Corneille attempted it. Molière wrote in verse a five-act tragi-comedy *Don Garcie de Navarre*. Fletcher, a contemporary of Shakespeare, called his *Faithful Shepherdess* a tragi-comedy and he enriched the scientific lexicon by defining his use of the word:—"A tragi-comedy is not so called in respect of mirth and killing, but in respect that it wants death, which is enough to make it no tragedy, yet brings some near it, which is enough to make it no comedy, which must be a representation of familiar people." Macaulay speaks of "the noble tragi-comedy of *Measure for Measure*."

Now and then we find the title revived by a modern dramatist. The late Henry Arthur Jones called his *Evangelist* a tragi-comedy. It has been suggested that Clyde Fitch's *Climbers* combines sufficiently the comic and the tragic to bring it properly under this head.

Chapter VI

A PERSON CALLED ARISTOTLE

The debunkers are having a glorious time. Historical ideals are toppling right and left. "True histories" are coming almost monthly from the press. Henry Ford's famous reported utterance "History is bunk" no longer raises a laugh. From these debunkers we are deriving some startling "facts." "The revolutionary army was made up of ragamuffins and hen-coop robbers." (This by a congressional debunker). Goethe's famous dying words "more light" become "raise the shades." Daniel Webster's immortal utterance "I still live" is, in revised form, "You haven't got rid of the old man yet." The "true George Washington" had "two sets of artificial teeth, a face pitted with small-pox, a red head, a well developed thirst and a penchant for poker." The famous Venus of Milo is, says a western newspaper, "by all modern standards a 'corn-fed', badly in need of some dietetic advice and a few steam baths. . . . She has done a most decided nose-dive off her pedestal as the Goddess of Beauty." The immortal inscription on the battle-monument at Lexington has been cleared up by a debunker. The words of the inscription, known by heart by every schoolboy, run as follows: "Stand your ground. Don't fire unless fired upon. But if they mean to have a war let it begin here." A learned delver into "facts" has discovered that what Captain John Parker really said was to this effect:—"There's going to be an awful row. We'd better go while the going's good." This particular "discovery" seems to have aroused no contradiction. The debunker scored a bull's eye. But what shall we do with the inscription? Shall we leave it in its present form? Is it right to perpetuate a sentiment so diametrically opposed to the words actually spoken?

The writer of this chapter brought the subject before one of his advanced college classes in History. This question was put to the class:—"Assume for the sake of the argument that the debunker is correct; what should be done with the Lexington inscription?" The class divided into three distinct groups. The first group said: "Erase the inscription. Tell the truth at any cost." The second group said: "Leave it as it is but place an asterisk at the end of the reported words and carve the real utterance upon the base of the rock." The third group, composing the great majority of the class, said: "Leave it as it is. It represents the real spirit of the patriots. They did stand their ground. They did not fire until fired upon. The British seemed to want a war and they got it."

And thus we come once more to jesting Pilate's unanswered question,—"What is truth?" Which is the true George Washington? Have a red head and two sets of artificial teeth anything to do with his greatness? Or was he great regardless of his artificial teeth and red head? The trouble with "true" books is that they are too much given to magnifying details which do not touch the essential man. After reading a biographical chapter on Washington's alleged poker playing and his bibulous propensities we have an uneasy feeling that the book has failed to disclose the mysterious secret of his real greatness. For great he was regardless of the color of his hair or the scars on his face.

These debunkers will be speaking disrespectfully of the Equator next. Now they are on the trail of Aristotle. Aristotle: "the mind of the school" as his teacher Plato called him. Aristotle: "the master of those that know," in Dante's memorable words. In these speedy days endorsements by Plato and Dante avail nothing. They themselves may soon come under suspicion. In the same spirit which led an ancient Athenian to vote against Aristides the Just simply because he was tired of hearing him called by this name certain impatient modernists have become weary of the constant appeals to "Aristotle the master."

Granville Barker is one of these objectors: "In the drama

we are constantly referred to the sayings of a person called Aristotle. I have nothing to urge against them, and their quotation, when one of Gilbert Murray's translations of Euripides appears would seem to me entirely appropriate. But, if the first words about the drama, however illuminating, are to be treated in any way whatsoever as if they must be the last, then I protest. The drama is alive, and about life there is nothing final to be said. I protest that in art nothing but its physical boundaries should be taken for granted. Surely the sign of life in art has always been the revolt against tradition, the determination to remold the old forms which will no longer perfectly contain or express the new spirit."

"A person called Aristotle." To call a man or woman a "person" is supposed to be the finishing stroke. There is only one word more deadly and that is the epithet "Victorian." If you fling the taunt "Victorian" at a man or a woman of the present day he or she is supposed to fall instantly into a coma. If he fails to drop in his tracks, it is to be considered proof that he is so great an ignoramus that it is useless to waste a perfectly good word on him.

This "Aristotle person" has at last met his deserts. A person called Granville Barker has administered the *coup de grâce*. Will he rally from the blow? We venture a prediction. This "person" has outlived the Granville Barkers of twenty-two hundred years. He has survived even Francis Bacon's castigation. He is good, we think, for at least one hundred years more. Will Barker, the critic, last so long? We back the "person" against the "critic."

And yet in spite of Barker's petulant words there is much more than a grain of truth in his outburst. It is reasonably certain that Aristotle himself, if he were alive, would acquiesce in every word of Mr. Barker's diatribe. It is not Aristotle's fault that his misguided admirers have made of him one of the greatest dogmatists in literary history. Aristotle was a critical inquirer, not a rigid schoolman. He rarely said "thou shalt"; he merely recorded the results of his careful investigations and summed up the evidence in the form of a scientific con-

clusion. The much-quoted treatise *The Poetics* was but one of scores of inquiries and investigations which he carried on while he was at the head of the Peripatetic School at Athens. His *Poetics* is no more dogmatic than the other scientific treatises which have come down to us under his name. His misguided and half-informed admirers have turned his observations and generalizations into iron-clad formulæ, binding on all writers for all time. In the chapter on *The Unities* we show how the ignorance of the fetish worshipers falsely held Aristotle responsible for the so-called rule of *The Three Unities*.

In *The Poetics* Aristotle simply records the results of his painstaking study of scores of plays. He detected, as he thought, certain similarities in the technic of these writers; these similarities he carefully noted and from them he formulated conclusions and tentative principles precisely as any trained scientific observer would do today. In addition to the raw dramatic material on which he worked, he doubtless had access to the critical dramatic treatises of contemporary and older writers. From all these investigations he reached certain conclusions which he recorded. His work is no more dogmatic, no less dogmatic than the newest modern book on dramatic criticism. Never did it occur to him that his words would be twisted into formulæ to which all the dramatists of the future must conform. He was too good a scientist to entertain so unscientific an idea. He has suffered greatly from the misguided zeal of his foolish and ill-informed admirers.

Aristotle would acquiesce in Barker's impatient words: "If the first words about the Drama . . . are to be treated . . . as if they were the last, then I protest. . . . Surely the sign of life in art has always been the revolt against tradition, the determination to remold the old forms which will no longer perfectly contain or express the new spirit." Mr. Barker is absolutely right in his contention. Tchekhoff, the great Russian dramatic innovator, says the same thing through the mouth of one of his characters in *The Sea-Gull*. "Let us have new forms." Eugene O'Neill is conspicuously and successfully ex-

emplifying the spirit of Tchekhoff's admonition. New forms? Certainly. That our modern dramatists and producers are struggling with new forms is the surest sign of the virility of the modern theater.

That we may fairly estimate the value of Aristotle's conclusions we shall bring together a few of his statements, literally translated from *The Poetics*. Before doing so however, as a partial antidote to Barker's acrid words, it is only fair to quote some estimates of Aristotle by men of genius in earlier and in more recent times.

Ben Jonson says in his *Discoveries*: "Aristotle was the first accurate critic and truest judge—nay, the greatest philosopher the world ever had."

Edmund Burke in his *On the Sublime and Beautiful:* "Aristotle has spoken so much and so solidly upon the force of imitation, in his *Poetics*, that it makes any further discourse upon this subject the less necessary."

Bywater, *Aristotle On the Art of Poetry:* "He has succeeded in formulating once for all the great first principles of dramatic art, the canons of dramatic logic which even the most adventurous of modern dramatists can only at his peril forget or set at naught."

A few passages which we have translated from Aristotle's *Poetics* will enable us to test the truth of Bywater's sweeping statement.

Chapter I. "People, connecting the idea of poetry and meter, are in the habit of naming certain poets as elegiac poets, others as epic poets, as though they were not poets because of their imitation, but they are collectively called poets because of their employment of meter; even if they write a medical treatise or a work on natural philosophy in meter men call them poets because they have used meter."

To test the truth of this statement a teacher needs simply to hold up before his students a few metrical lines of doggerel on soap or sausages and ask them whether it is poetry or prose. Guided entirely by the typographical appearance of the lines the class will unhesitatingly express the opinion that

it is "poetry." The "meter" makes it "poetry" in their estimation.

Chapter II. "We must depict men as either better than they are in real life or worse than they are or as they really are." That is, we must idealize men or caricature them or represent them realistically. The portrait painter idealizes his subjects; the comic strip caricatures them; the untouched photograph negative represents men exactly as they are,—wrinkles and all.

Chapter IV. "Poetry as a whole seems to have arisen from two causes, both of which are innate in humanity; for the instinct of imitation is innate in men from childhood, and man differs from other animals in that he is the most imitative of all, and he acquires his first knowledge through imitation . . . next, we have a natural instinct for harmony and rhythm."

To verify this assertion study the imitative acquisition of speech and personal habits by a young child; note also the rhythmical beat of the hands and the feet of a music-loving but uncultivated audience at a band concert.

Chapter IV. "When dialogue had been introduced nature herself discovered the appropriate meter; for the iambic is above all other meters suitable for the spoken word; the proof is that we make use of this meter more frequently than any other in our conversation with one another." Observe how effectively this explains the iambic trimeter of Greek tragedy and comedy and the iambic blank verse of Elizabethan drama. In selecting a meter for the dialogue portions of drama, the poets instinctively chose the meter which corresponds most closely to the intonation of spoken prose. Consider for example, the familiar hymn:

Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer,
That calls me from a world of care.

These verses are in what would be called in modern prosody iambic tetrameter. The two lines contain in all eight iambic feet. We could easily construct a colloquial prose sentence con-

taining exactly the same meter and the same number of beats:—*"I think this is a grand old hymn; we often hear it sung in church."* In this colloquial sentence we have, almost unconsciously, dropped into iambic meter. If a person has a sense of meter and rhythm he can frame, in ordinary conversational prose, sentence after sentence in iambic meter without detection by his listener. Such a test will furnish conclusive proof of the accuracy of Aristotle's explanation of the adoption of iambic meter in the dialogue portions of ancient and modern drama.

Chapter IX. "Poetry is a more philosophical and a more serious thing than history; for poetry is more concerned with the universal, history with matters pertaining to the individual."

An extreme illustration of the universality of poetry will be found in the Morality play *Everyman;* the universality is vividly expressed by the very title of the play. An example of particularizing history would be Carlyle's *History of Frederick the Great.*

Chapter XIV. "For the plot ought to be so constructed that even without seeing the events the hearer will shudder and feel pity when he hears of them."

This statement will be found true when tested by Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus,* Shakespeare's *Othello,* or Marlowe's *Edward the Second.*

Chapter XVII. "In constructing his plot and in supplying it with appropriate language the poet must, as far as possible, keep the incidents before his own eyes."

This was precisely the method employed by Sardou and by Ibsen. Sardou is said to have drawn detailed diagrams and plans of the locale in which his scene was laid. Every tree and every shrub in the surrounding grounds was carefully marked in his sketch.

It is asserted by reliable critics though denied by others that Ibsen used on his writing-desk little figures, moving them like chessmen from place to place as the various entrances and exits required. Whether or not these reported habits of Sardou

and Ibsen are literally true it is a fact that both were scrupulously careful in visualizing the scenes which they were depicting in their plays. Some absurd stage blunders occasionally arise from lack of observance of this principle. The back-drop of a certain play represented a deep canyon through which flowed a river far below. The house was near the edge of the canyon. One of the characters opened a back door in the house and nonchalantly walked out; in real life he would have plunged a thousand feet to his death; in the play he reappeared in a few moments through one of the side entrances.

Chapter XXII. "Excellence of diction consists in being clear without being commonplace."

A characteristically sensible remark. Modern editorial writers have perfected this art. The writer of this chapter asked his students to read every day for a week an editorial or two in any reputable daily newspaper and to report any sentence which they were obliged to read a second time to get the editor's meaning. No example of obscurity was reported by the class. Editorial writers have acquired the art of expressing themselves so clearly without ornament that in reading their work the diction, as such, drops entirely out of sight. Their language is like a perfectly transparent pane of glass; it transmits without attracting attention to itself.

Chapter XXIV. "Excessively brilliant diction obscures both the character drawing and the thought."

Note how aptly this applies to Oscar Wilde with his endlessly brilliant quips and repartees. We can quote Wilde's *mots* by the dozen: "If a woman really repents, she has to go to a bad dressmaker, otherwise no one believes in her." "A cynic is a man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing." "It is absurd to divide people into good and bad. People are either charming or tedious." Citations from Wilde might be heaped up but the remarkable fact about them is that we cannot remember who uttered them. "Character" is indeed, "obscured" by Wilde's brilliant diction. It is really Oscar Wilde who is speaking through his characters. Compare with Wilde's frothy quips the unforget-

table cry of the exiled Lear: "Cordelia, Cordelia! Stay a little!" No over-brilliant diction here; a broken heart pouring out its woe in childlike words.

We have thus brought together a few of Aristotle's sayings. We do not think they merit the term "dogmatic." They sound like the utterances of a modern newspaper dramatic critic. But whether dogmatic or not the more important question is "Are they true?" And, if true, are they true only of Aristotle's day or are they equally true today? The reader must decide this question for himself; there are not wanting those who believe that some or all of the utterances here quoted have a universal and timeless application.

This "person called Aristotle" seems to stand successfully the acid test of practical application to the drama of today. Granville Barker is right. Aristotle is right. It is the foolish fetish worshipers who are wrong; it is they who have read into Aristotle's words mistaken meanings; it is they and they alone who have constructed dogmas and iron-clad "rules" out of his purely scientific observations.

CHAPTER VII

THE UNITIES

WITH the possible exception of Aristotle's famous doctrine of tragedy as a purgation of the emotions of pity and fear no question in the whole realm of dramatic criticism has been as widely discussed as the so-called *Aristotelian Unities*. For over three hundred years they have been misquoted, misinterpreted, and misunderstood. Handled in the middle ages by men who could not read a word of the original Greek they have been passed down the centuries by men equally ignorant, until today with the decay of Greek scholarship we find ourselves in almost exactly the position of the men of the Renaissance who talked glibly about an Aristotle who was essentially a sealed book to them. The critical world is paying today a heavy penalty for the dropping of Greek from the modern college curriculum.

In his *Study of the Drama*, the late Brander Matthews quotes amusingly the wise utterances of a certain Mr. Curdle who had expressed the hope that Nicholas Nickleby had in his new play "Preserved the Unities."

> "Might I ask you," said the hesitating Nicholas, "what the Unities are?"
>
> Mr. Curdle coughed and considered; "The Unities, sir," he said, "are a completeness—a kind of universal dovetailedness with regard to time and place—a sort of general oneness, if I may be allowed to use so strong an expression. I take those to be the dramatic unities, so far as I have been enabled to bestow attention upon them, and I have read much upon the subject, and thought much."

Mr. Curdle's answer shows that he had some mental attributes which would qualify him for admission to a modern college;

he was able from the wording of a question to deduce the proper answer. Mr. Curdle talked glibly and well, and ended by defining the Unities as a sort of unity. The art is still practiced by college students. The writer of this chapter once had occasion to examine in Greek history the applicants for admission to the Freshman class of a New England university. One of the set questions was: "State something about the *Thirty Tyrants*." A candidate wrote in reply: "The first of the thirty tyrants was a very bad man; he was tyrannical; he robbed people of their money; he tyrannized over them and he died. And there were twenty-nine others just like him." Mr. Curdle is the classical prototype of these ingenious young modern scholars.

Where can we find the Three Unities? They are generally supposed to be recorded in a work known as *The Poetics* of Aristotle, a work which has played an enormous rôle in critical study, a treatise which is at the basis of nearly all of the dramatic criticism of the present day. At a small outlay the studious reader can procure from Harcourt Brace and Company, New York, an excellent translation of Aristotle's *Poetics* by Professor Lane Cooper of Cornell University. The translation is illustrated by examples from modern drama. If a student will master this little book he will know more about the Unities of Aristotle than a large percentage of the modern dramatic critics who misquote and misrepresent him.

The three so-called *Aristotelian Unities* are: Unity of Time, Unity of Place, and Unity of Action.

As ordinarily defined, Unity of Time means that the action of a play must fall within a day, or not much in excess of twenty-four hours.

By Unity of Place we usually mean that there shall be no change of scene within a play, or, if a change occurs, it shall be confined to the limits of a single town, as, for example, Seville, in Corneille's *Cid*, Alexandria, in Dryden's *All for Love*.

Mr. Curdle's definition of the Unity of Action as "a kind of universal dovetailedness" will serve very well as an

expression of the popular conception of that Unity. The Unity of Action seems to be the only unity of which Mr. Curdle had any clear notion.

These are the general and popular conceptions of the three Unities. What did Aristotle really say about these Unities?

His solitary remark on the Unity of Time is found in Chapter V of the *Poetics*.

"They (that is, Epic Poetry and Tragedy) differ in length; for tragedy tries as far as possible, to confine itself to one revolution of the sun, or to exceed it but little; whereas epic poetry is unlimited in time." Study this translation word by word and mark its significance. Note, for example, the blunder of the scholars of the French Academy in their condemnation of Corneille's *Le Cid:* "As a fact, Aristotle has fixed the length of time in a stage play and has given to the action of a play only the time which elapses between sunrise and sunset" (*A la vérité, Aristote a prescrit le temps des pièces de théâtre, et n'a donné aux actions qui en font le sujet que l'espace compris entre le lever et le coucher du soleil*). Mark the dogmatism of the word "prescrit," *prescribed, set down authoritatively,* as the French dictionaries define the word. Note, also, the interpretation of "a single revolution of the sun" as limiting the action to about twelve hours instead of twenty-four.

The reader must keep firmly in mind that Aristotle said "tries," and that he was not laying down a definite rule; such translations as "prescrit" and "doit" have done untold harm in fettering the wings of genius in the name of the mighty Aristotle. Mark further that it is essentially an observation, not a dogmatic assertion; in his wide reading of Greek tragedies Aristotle had noted that the writers "try, as far as possible, to get the action within a single revolution of the sun or but slightly to exceed this limit." Leaving open for the moment the meaning of the phrase "a single revolution of the sun" we are chiefly interested in the Greek word "endeavors" or "tries." The Greek word means exactly "tries" or "endeavors"; one of the most lamentable errors translators

ever made was that committed by the French critics who translated the Greek word *peiratei*, "tries" by *doit*, "ought." By a stroke of the pen the French blunderers translated an observation into a dogma; by that single stroke of a faulty pen the French translator outlawed Shakespeare and ninety-five per cent of the dramatists of Elizabethan England, Spain, and Germany; from that moment the Elizabethans became, in Voltaire's eyes, "barbarians." The mistranslation *doit* for "tries" enabled that adulator of the French, Frederick the Great, in his *German Literature*, to sneer at Shakespeare's plays as "ridiculous farces, worthy of the savages of Canada." Why? "They offend against all the rules of the stage." We shall presently show the effect of this *doit* and this *prescrit* upon the writers who, in adopting it as an "ought," thought they were walking in the footsteps of the master Aristotle. They were not walking in his footprints; they had gone badly astray.

Consider for a moment the important clause "as far as possible." The proviso indicates that Greek writers did not always succeed in their "endeavor" to get the action within "one revolution of the sun"; Aristotle had read plays that did not fall within one "revolution of the sun"; among the thirty-three classical Greek tragedies which have come down to us are several which do not fall within this limit. If the *doit* scholars taunt Shakespeare as a barbarian because his plots exceed twenty-four hours, Aeschylus is likewise a barbarian because the action of his *Agamemnon* and his *Eumenides* cannot possibly be brought within twenty-four hours. In the *Agamemnon*, it would have been absolutely impossible for the leading character to reach home within twenty-four hours after the announcement of the fall of Troy; in the *Eumenides* the hero could not possibly pass from Delphi to Athens within twenty-four hours; Butcher estimates the amount of time which elapses between the opening and the close of the *Eumenides* as "months or years." Sophocles and Euripides must also become "barbarians" in the eyes of the fetish worshipers of the Unities. The *Trachiniæ* of Sophocles and the *Supplices* of

Euripides require more than twenty-four hours to complete the action. What shall we say of the "classical" French and English dramatists who attempt to become more "classical" than the classicists, "more royal than the King"?

We take up next the Unity of Place. Where shall we find it in the *Poetics?* It is not there! Not a word there about Unity of Place. Incredible? Certainly incredible in view of the numberless references in modern works to the "Aristotelian Unity of Place." But, we repeat, there is not a reference direct or indirect concerning the restriction of the scene of a play to a single place. There is a legend that one of the great English publishers of the King James version of the *Bible* offers a standing reward of a guinea to anybody who discovers a typographical error in their edition. Not a bad idea, this, in view of the alleged historical fact that one of the early English translations of the *Bible* omitted the all-important word "not" from the seventh commandment in the twentieth chapter of *Exodus.* A scholar versed in the original Greek text of Aristotle would be justified in offering a similar reward to anybody who can find a reference to the Unity of Place in the extant *Poetics* of Aristotle. We shall presently refer to the late invention of this Unity of Place but we content ourselves for the moment with a repetition of the statement that Aristotle does not mention such a unity.

We come now to the third and last Unity, that of action. Is that, also, due to a misunderstanding of Aristotle? Is it a later invention? Emphatically, no! On this one Unity, and this alone,—the Unity of Action, Aristotle lays reiterated stress. But, important as this Unity is in his estimation we must gather his scattered remarks on this subject, we must bring together, from various chapters of the *Poetics,* his observations, and thus constitute what we have gradually come to designate as the Unity of Action. For, note carefully, Aristotle himself never speaks of The Unities; never does he take them up one by one and discuss them under a specific title. His entire *Poetics* as it has come down to us is so staccato in style, so fragmentary, so quick in transition from one topic

to another that scholars have found it necessary to devise an explanation of its present condition. Some have suggested that it contains merely the brief notes which Aristotle had jotted down in preparation for the lectures before his students; others regard the work as notes taken by one or more of his pupils; it has been suggested that it was Aristotle's first draft of a formal treatise, but that for some reason he never completed the manuscript; had he revised the work he would have omitted the duplicate passages and would have explained or removed what seem, in a few cases, to be contradictory statements.

What then do we find scattered here and there in the *Poetics*, *disjecta membra* that we can put together under the general head of Unity of Action? The more important passages are the following:

Chapter VII. "Tragedy is an imitation of a complete and whole action having a certain magnitude . . . a well-constructed plot must neither begin nor end haphazard."

Chapter VIII. Since the plot is an imitation of an action, it must be the imitation of a single action which is a complete unit, and the individual details of the action must be so arranged that if any one part is transposed or taken away the whole plot will be altered and disturbed. For anything which can be added or removed without detection is not an organic part of the whole.

Chapter VIII. "A plot is not necessarily a unit when it is confined to the actions of one man; for in a man's life are many, even numberless, incidents which cannot be reduced to unity; likewise a man may perform many actions which we cannot possibly reduce to a unified action."

Chapter IX. "Of all plots and actions the episodic are the worst. I call an episodic plot one in which the episodes have no probable or necessary sequence."

Chapter XV. "In the treatment of the characters one must, as in the arrangement of the incidents, seek either an inevitable or a probable sequence."

Chapter XV. "There must be nothing irrational in the

action; if this cannot be avoided, the irrationality must be confined to matters outside of the tragedy itself."

Chapter XVII. "We must see to it that the episodes shall be germane to the action."

Chapter XXIII. "In an historical work, however, one event may follow another event without any organic connection."

James Russell Lowell in his *The Old English Dramatists* well sums up the underlying thought of these scattered passages which, collectively, we term Unity of Action:—"In a play, we not only expect a succession of scenes, but that each scene should lead, by a logic more or less stringent, if not to the next, at any rate to something that is to follow, and that all should contribute their fraction of impulse towards the inevitable catastrophe. That is to say, the structure should be organic, with a necessary and harmonious connection and relation of parts, and not merely mechanical, with an arbitrary or haphazard joining of one part to another. It is in the former sense alone that any production can be called a work of art."

In the light of the above extracts regarding the Unities of Time and Action, and the significant omission of all reference to the so-called Unity of Place we are prepared to controvert the strange misconceptions of Aristotle's real utterances, as set forth by various authors from the time of Corneille down to the present.

Frederick the Great, in his *On German Literature* is a glaring example: "For these rules are not arbitrary; you will find them in the *Poetics* of Aristotle where Unity of Place, Unity of Time, and Unity of Interest are prescribed as the only means of making tragedy interesting." And this is the Frederick who denounced Shakespeare because he did not observe the Unities! A fine sample of the pompous utterances of critics who do not compare, or are unable to compare, their translations with the original words of their authorities.

Brander Matthews (*A Study of the Drama*): "Aristotle knew not the Unities and did not discuss them at all." Not by

name, it is true, but he certainly did *refer* to *time* and he did *insist* on *action*.

Cannon (*Writing and Selling a Play*): "Aristotle laid great stress on the Unities,—those oft quoted unities of time, place, and action." He did not lay great stress on either time or place.

Professor Lewis Campbell in *Tragic Drama:* "Even on the Attic stage there are exceptions to Aristotle's requirement of a limit of twenty-four hours." Even Homer nods. Even the fine scholar Lewis Campbell has tripped. Not a *requirement* of twenty-four hours, simply an *observation* that the dramatists "tried, as far as possible, to confine the action to one revolution of the sun."

Gilbert Norwood (*Euripides and Shaw*): "Aristotle makes one passing remark that it is *advisable* to restrict the events of a drama to one revolution of the sun." Aristotle does not say that it is "advisable" to do it; he simply notes that they try to do it.

The Unity of Action has been subjected to various interpretations. Laharpe has the authority of Aristotle when he says: "By Unity of Action we mean consistency of character." Aristotle had himself insisted upon this consistency: "If," said he, "we are depicting an inconsistent character, we must see to it that he is consistently inconsistent." Probably Horace is emphasizing the same conception of Unity of Action when in the *Ars Poetica* he says:—

Si quid inexpertum scenae committis et audes
Personam formare novam, servetur ad imum
Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet.

Some writers think they have secured Unity of Action if they limit the plot to the actions of a single hero. Aristotle disputes this theory. He says that a man may perform many actions which cannot be presented to the audience as a dramatic unity. The real test of dramatic action, according to Aristotle, is this: In a well-constructed play each action leads to the next action either inevitably, or, at least without violating probability. It is evident that the haphazard unpremeditated actions

of the average man do not meet this test; doubtless there is a psychological connection between all the actions of a human being, but it is often impossible for a casual observer to see the connecting links. Stage actions must be logically connected; they must follow one another either by the inevitable laws of logic or at least without violating our sense of the probable.

Aristotle calls attention to the dramatic error committed by playwrights who select a single hero, (Ulysses, for example,) and think that by grouping incidents around him they have created a dramatic unity. This procedure is allowable in an epic, but, in the drama, there must be a rigid process of selection; out of the multitudinous actions that a man performs or may perform, we must select or invent only those which are connected by the law of Inevitability or, at least, of Probability. It follows, therefore, that Unity of Hero is not necessarily Unity of Action.

Another fallacy into which dramatists often fall is that a succession of stirring scenes in which the same character appears constitutes Unity of Action. This dramatic fault was very conspicuous in the old style serial photo-plays which ran through several months; the only connection between the weekly episodes of these plays was the regular reappearance of characters. In a well-constructed drama each act leaves the audience with a definite expectation regarding the next act. If we leave the auditorium between the acts, we return for the specific purpose of seeing, on the stage, the acting out of the particular thing which we were led to anticipate at the close of the preceding act. A favorite actor or actress may indeed bring us back to our seats, but, if the play is a real play, we return to see this actor or actress do or say something which was foreshadowed in the previous act.

Are sub-plots permissible under Unity of Action? Aristotle did not discuss them and they were unknown to the Greek tragic writers. Certain modern advocates of the Unity of Action insist that we may, without violating the law, admit sub-plots, even though the Greeks did not employ them. Sub-plots may shed light on the leading characters of the play; they may

perform a legitimate function in furthering the main plot. In determining the question whether or not a sub-plot is permissible under Unity of Action we may apply a test which Aristotle had himself formulated: "That which may be present or absent without being perceived is not an organic part of the whole." In other words, if a thing can be omitted without being missed it is not an essential part of the plot. If a sub-plot adds something essential to the play, if its absence would weaken the structure of the play and retard the development of the main plot, it may be used without violating Unity of Action.

The theory of the Dramatic Unities originated among the scholars at the court of Pope Leo X. Leo was born in 1475, was elected Pope in 1513 and died in 1521. He was celebrated as a munificent patron of literature and art. The period of the sixteenth century which was distinguished for its art and learning is still known as the "Age of Leo." The scholars at the court of Leo devoted great attention to the study and imitation of the ancient classics. As a result of these studies there grew up a body of critical formulæ which were supposed to find their warrant in the classical authors.

The first practical application of the theory of the Unities with which we are acquainted was the *Sofonisba* of Gian Giorgio Trissino in 1515. Trissino was one of the most celebrated scholars of the golden age of Leo. In 1514, one year after Leo's election to the Papacy, Trissino went to Rome and was favorably received by Leo. His Italian drama *Sofonisba,* 1515, is the first regular tragedy known in any modern European language; this *Sofonisba* was the first dramatic piece in which the so-called "rules" of Aristotle were strictly observed. Sismondi says of Trissino's *Sofonisba:*—"The most just title to fame possessed by Trissino is founded on his *Sofonisba,* which may be considered as the first regular tragedy since the revival of letters, and which we may with still greater justice regard as the last of the tragedies of antiquity, so exactly is it founded on the principles of Grecian drama; and, above all, on those of Euripides." Trissino imitated so closely the con-

struction of the original Greek plays that he omitted the division into acts and scenes, and introduced a chorus.

Two important Italian successors of Trissino in the work of establishing the reign of the Unities in modern drama are Giraldi Giovanni Battista, surnamed Cintio or Cinthio and Francesco Robortello.

Cintio was born at Ferrara in 1514 and died there in 1573. He held a Professorship of Medicine and later of Belles Lettres at the University of Ferrara. He wrote several tragedies, one of which, the well-known *Orbecche,* was published in 1541. Cintio's most important prose work was *Hecatommithi* (or *Ecatomiti*), a collection of tales which bear some resemblance to the stories of Boccaccio. Shakespeare found in the *Hecatommithi* the source of the plots of his own *Measure for Measure* and *Othello.* Cintio deserves a prominent place in the long history of the Unities because of his work *On Comedy and Tragedy* in which he interpreted Aristotle's "a single revolution of the sun" as an absolute law limiting the time of a plot to a single day. To Cintio we must, apparently, trace the first misinterpretation of Aristotle's word "tries" into the word "ought," an error perpetuated by the French classicists in their translations *doit* and *prescrit.*

Francesco Robortello, born at Udine, Italy, in 1516, was Professor of Rhetoric at Venice, and he taught Greek and Latin at Padua. Robortello interpreted Aristotle's "single revolution of the sun" as meaning only twelve hours,—the space included in one "revolution" of the sun from the eastern to the western horizon. His argument is delightfully naïve: "tragedy can contain only one single and continuous action, and as people are accustomed to sleep in the night it follows that the tragic action cannot be continued beyond one artificial day."

The modern critic has a feeling of mingled amusement and irritation as he reads of the strange mental processes of the mediæval professors and theorists who raised so pretentious a critical structure upon so flimsy a foundation. It would be thoroughly amusing were it not for the cramping fetters

which these "rules" laid upon soaring genius. Later we shall say something in defense of the so-called "rules" of the Unities but we shall not base our argument upon any supposed "musts" or "oughts" of Aristotle.

Trissino's *Sofonisba* was brought out in 1515. That play was destined to find its way into France more than a century later, and to exert through a French translation a masterly influence upon the "classical" drama of that country; the *Sofonisba* of Trissino is responsible for the introduction of the Unities into France. In 1629 Mairet translated the *Sofonisba* into French under the title *Sophonisbe* and brought it out at Rouen in the same year. That the French regard Trissino as responsible for the introduction of the Unities into France is clearly indicated by Voltaire in his dissertation on tragedy: "An author by the name of Mairet was the first who, by imitating the *Sofonisba* of Trissino, introduced into France the rule of the Three Unities." Again, in his remarks on the first discourse of Corneille, Voltaire says: "The *Sophonisbe* of Mairet was the first piece in France where these three Unities appeared." In his comments on Mairet's *Sophonisbe* Voltaire says: "It is true that the *Sophonisbe* of Mairet had a merit that was entirely new in France; namely, it conformed to the rules of the stage. The Three Unities of Time, Place and Action are there perfectly observed." Laharpe, in his *Cours de Littérature* emphatically supplements Voltaire: "*Sophonisbe*, imitated from the play of Trissino, was the first of our tragedies that has a regular plot and is subjected to the Three Unities."

Critics have wrangled much over Aristotle's reference to "one revolution of the sun." What did he mean? The words are usually interpreted as signifying the period from sunrise to sunrise,—twenty-four hours. The French Academy referred the words to the period between sunrise and sunset,—approximately twelve hours. The ultra-strict French classicists (pseudo-classicists as we call them today) insisted that only those plays really observe the Unity of Time in which the plot covers no longer a period than is required to act the play,—say three hours or three and a half hours as a maximum. At one swoop

these purists stamped as "barbaric" at least ninety per cent of all the plays ever written. The general interpretation of Aristotle's words "or not much in excess of one revolution of the sun" is that we may add a maximum of about six hours to the allowable twenty-four, giving us about thirty hours as the greatest amount of time permitted in the action of a play.

The classical Spanish dramatists of the time of Lope de Vega (1562-1635), a contemporary of Shakespeare, cared nothing for the Unity of Time. Lope himself says in his *New Art of Writing Plays in this Age:* "There is no use in advising that it should take place in the period of one sun, though this is the view of Aristotle . . . Let it take place in as little time as possible, except when the poet is writing history, in which some years have to pass; these he can relegate to the space between the acts." Note the persistent error in interpreting Aristotle's observation on "time" as a "rule." Lope's own theory is that a play should be divided into three acts, and that the events of each act should, if possible, be limited to one day. In giving this advice Lope was keeping strictly to the literal meaning of the Spanish word for act,—*Jornada*, which signifies, "a march or journey performed in one day." Corneille, influenced doubtless by his study of Spanish, had, at one time, adopted in his plays this principle of a day for each act, but he later abandoned it in deference to what was considered to be Aristotle's injunction that the action of the entire play ought to fall within twenty-four hours or thirty at the most.

The Unities appealed especially to the logical order-loving mind of the French. Corneille was profoundly influenced by them; he staunchly advocated them and made a conscientious effort to conform his plays to the spirit of the Unities, though in his earlier plays he found himself forced to depart from the letter of the "laws." He produced his first play, *Mélite*, in 1629, the year in which Mairet's translation of Trissino's *Sofonisba* was produced. The severe criticism to which he was subjected because of his method of using the Unities in the *Cid*, 1636, so chastened and subdued him, that

from the time of that play to his *Surena* (1674) he endeavored to conform to them in both the spirit and the letter. The third of his *Trois Discours* (1656) is an argument for the Unities, showing the advantage and even the necessity of employing them in drama. Corneille was followed by Racine and later by Voltaire. Perhaps the most succinct statement of the "law" of the Unities is that given by Boileau in his *Art of Poetry:*

> *"Qu'en un lieu, qu'en un jour, un seul fait accompli*
> *Tienne jusqu' à la fin le théâtre rempli."*

The principle of the Unities became an inexorable law, the violation of which subjected the offender to contemptuous criticism. As early as the date of Corneille's *Trois Discours* the Unities had acquired domination over the French dramatic world: "Nobody doubts that we must observe Unity of Action, of Place and of Time," says Corneille in his Third Discourse. Nearly seventy-five years later Voltaire writes in 1730: "All the nations begin today to regard as barbaric the period when the Unities were ignored by the greatest geniuses such as Lope de Vega and Shakespeare." Now and then in the early part of the eighteenth century an opposing voice was heard; a writer named de la Motte vigorously attacked the Unities, but he went down to defeat under the vigorous onslaught of Voltaire.

By the time of Voltaire the employment of the Unities had become so firmly established that opponents were silenced by a reference to the great dramatists of France, England, and Italy who had written in conformity with the Rules. In his preface to *Oedipus* Voltaire says: "Even if I had no other answer to give M. de la Motte than the fact that Corneille, Racine, Molière, Addison, Congreve and Maffei have all observed the laws of the stage, that ought to be enough to restrain anyone who should entertain the idea of violating them."

The French had voluntarily submitted to the sway of the Unities, but they found that the restriction of the time of a plot to twenty-four hours and the limitation of the place to a single spot unchanged throughout the entire play would se-

verely hamper the choice of themes and the method of developing the plot. We have only to look over the wide field of drama to realize how few plays would remain if all but the Unity-observing pieces were destroyed. Spanish drama of the time of Lope de Vega would be wiped out; practically nothing of Shakespeare except the *Tempest* and the *Comedy of Errors* would survive; nearly all of Ibsen would go; of modern drama not much over one per cent would survive. The French soon felt the pinch and began to look about for some method of observing the "rules" while acquiring more freedom of movement under them. We have noted Corneille's attempt to limit each act to a single day, thus observing in name the twenty-four hour "rule." By a still further stretching of the principle it would be possible to imagine weeks, months or even years as elapsing between the acts, thus covering many years in fact while ostensibly observing the twenty-four hour rule. Pitiful juggling, this futile attempt to escape from the fetters which false scholarship had clapped upon French drama. Corneille's ingenuity met with a stern rebuff and he abandoned the time-stretching device.

But there was still another resource available. Aristotle had spoken of "one revolution of the sun or not much in excess." Here was a chance to extend the time of the action. How much is "not much"? Six hours? Eight hours? Twelve hours? Corneille's audacity did not reach beyond six hours in addition to the original twenty-four. In 1636, only seven years after the *Sophonisbe* had been brought out, he says in his *Third Discourse:* "Speaking for myself, I find that there are some subjects which are so difficult to compress within so short a time that not only would I give them the full twenty-four hours, but I should even take advantage of the license given me by Aristotle to exceed this period a little, and I would without scruple extend that period to thirty hours." All of which seemed the audacious proposition of an unscrupulous man. Voltaire could not tolerate such liberties with the sacred Unities; under no circumstances would he permit a longer period than twenty-four hours; he was

more classical than the classicists themselves. We have seen that he would limit the action to about three hours; his reasoning is one of the most delicious bits of nonsense in the history of dramatic criticism: "It would even be very proper were the action of the play to cover no longer a period than the time taken to perform the play. We may, however, sacrifice this merit to a greater merit; namely, that of interesting the audience. It is a question simply of tears. If you can cause more tears to flow by extending your action to twenty-four hours, take the day and the night; but do not go beyond that, for in that case the illusion would be destroyed." If the shades of Aristotle and Voltaire ever meet in Elysium, the comments of Aristotle on the proposed tear-test of his French disciple would make interesting reading.

We have emphasized the fact that there is no reference whatever to the Unity of Place in Aristotle's *Poetics*. This Unity seems to owe its origin to Trissino; he confined the action of a play to the building in which the action originated. Even the freedom of movement from one room to another in the same building was not always sufficient to meet the needs of a dramatist. Corneille chafed under it, precisely as he had been uneasy under the Unity of Time. In his *Third Discourse* he pleads for an enlargement of the rule just as he had pleaded for an extension of the time from twenty-four hours to thirty: "I could wish," said he, "that the action presented on the stage might not change from the room or house in which it began; but it is difficult, if not impossible, to do this and we must necessarily allow an extension of place, just as we did that of time. I insist, therefore, that we should observe the literal Unity of Place, so far as it is possible; but since it cannot be observed with all subjects, I would gladly permit that Unity of Place could be so interpreted as that everything that takes place in a single *city* shall be regarded as observing the Unity of Place."

It required one hundred years to establish the Unities in France; when once established they ruled almost unmolested for two hundred years. Their reign came to a sudden end in

1830 when they were overthrown by Victor Hugo's epoch-making tragedy *Hernani.*

Few, if any, modern dramatists make a conscious effort to observe the Unities of Time and Place. Occasionally we find a play the action of which falls within twenty-four hours. Oscar Wilde, in his *Lady Windermere's Fan,* explicitly states that the action of the play takes place within this period. Occasionally we find the entire action of a play passing without any change of scenery. Maugham's *The Circle* observes both time and place in the strictest sense. The action all takes place in the drawing-room at Aston-Adey; the three acts fall within the morning, the afternoon, and the evening of one day.

Probably no modern plays are intentionally limited in time or place through obedience to the Law of the Unities. It should be remembered however that in spite of the slavish obedience of the classicists to what they considered absolute rules hallowed by the sacred edicts of Aristotle, there are distinct advantages in observing these Unities in certain dramatic situations. The Unities of Time and Place favor condensation of plot and conciseness of treatment. Ibsen had probably never heard of the Unities of Time and Place yet in his *Doll's House* and *Ghosts* he observes Unity of Place, and practically conforms to the Unity of Time. He begins both these plays with the crisis, with what would have been the fourth act of the old style five-act play. Beginning with the crisis, he relates by what is known as exposition the events which had preceded the opening of the play. He begins *A Doll's House* with the threat of Krogstad to expose Nora's forgery. When this play was brought out in a moving-picture version in Boston, the entire story, from the sickness of Nora's husband to the final departure of Nora from her husband's house, was thrown upon the screen. Ibsen begins *Ghosts* with the return of Mrs. Alving's son from Paris; a more discursive dramatist would have depicted the sordid events which led Mrs. Alving to send her son away from home.

When a dramatist begins his play with a crisis he almost inevitably shortens his Time and concentrates in Place. Su-

preme crises usually reach swift conclusions; a crisis is usually confined to a single spot. Writers of the Ibsen type instinctively construct concentrated plots which observe the Unities of Time and Place; in observing unconsciously these Unities they really offer powerful testimony to the dramatic value of the Unities when intelligently used.

Hitherto the most captious critics of the Unities of Time and Place have kept their hands off the Unity of Action. But the modern investigator spares no traditional doctrine or belief. As one contemporary critic puts it: "Every advance in morals has been made by questioning the validity of the moral code then in force." In the newer critical treatises we find the various Aristotelian principles or observations which collectively we call the "Unity of Action" sharply attacked. Aristotle had insisted upon a careful selection of incidents, arranged in an order which is at least probable and, if possible, logically inevitable. He emphasized the principle that we cannot bring together a series of disconnected events even if they are taken from the life history of one man. The modern critics are insisting that drama is a reflection of life and that human life is not constructed on this strictly logical plan. "It is not true," say they, "that we can discover an inevitable or even a probable connection among the multitudinous actions of life." We are hearing much just now of the "slice of life play,"—the unfinished play. Aristotle had said that a play should have a beginning; and he had defined a beginning as that which has nothing before it. "Ridiculous," say the critics, "it is equivalent to saying that all plays should begin in the garden of Eden." Aristotle had said that a play should have an end, and he had defined an end as that which has nothing after it; "Absurd," says the modern critic, "according to this theory, all plays must end at the Day of Judgment." The laugh is supposed to be on Aristotle; but it is not; "the master of those who know" knew a thing or two in his day. Aristotle had in mind the selection of an incident which forms in itself a logical series of events having a definite beginning, a definite middle, a definite end. Shakespeare's *Lear*, to mention but one

out of countless plays which the world calls "great," fully meets this test. *Lear* treats of a single incident,—the division of Lear's property, its immediate consequences, the ultimate result of the action. Here we have a complete episode with a beginning,—the division; a middle,—the ill treatment by his daughters; the end,—the death of Cordelia and Lear. To say that, because Lear was living before the opening of the play and Edgar survives the close of the play, the tragedy does not "begin" and "end" as Aristotle had defined "beginning" and "ending" is a reflection upon the intelligence of the critics rather than a valid criticism of Aristotle.

In another chapter we comment on Granville Barker's cheap fling at "a person called Aristotle." It almost seems that he was deliberately challenging this "person" when he wrote the closing words of his *Madras House.* "An end is that which has nothing after it," said Aristotle. *The Madras House* ends in this defiant way: Philip and his wife Jessica are discussing their future domestic policy; they "must learn to live on a thousand pounds a year"; Philip must "go on the County Council";

> *Philip:* "No, I grant it's not easy. But it's got to be done.
> *Jessica:* "Yes. . . ."

And the play ends with the following stage directions: "She doesn't finish, for really there is no end to the subject. But for a moment or two longer, happy together, they stand looking into the fire." "*Really there is no end to the subject.*" That certainly seems like a challenge to the "Aristotle person." The Aristotelians will promptly accept the challenge. They are willing to submit to any intelligent audience the question of choice between a play which "ends" as Aristotle defined an end, ends as do *Hamlet, Lear* and *Othello,* bringing a carefully selected incident to a definite conclusion, or a play which stops in the middle of a sentence, in the midst of a conversation which might go on interminably. It may be found that there is, in the human mind, a distinct preference for a dramatic problem which is really solved in some way, rather than a question left suspended in the air. Both methods are doubt-

less legitimate; Aristotle prefers one style of conclusion, Granville Barker another; the overwhelming majority of writers have found the Aristotelian ending more satisfying and effective.

GREEK PERIOD

VIII. BEGINNINGS OF DRAMA IN EUROPE
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Chapter VIII

THE BEGINNINGS OF DRAMA IN EUROPE

In the chapter on The Origin of the Drama we presented the scientist's point of view; we allowed the anthropologist to trace the psychological development of the human race from the sway of instinct to the gradual growth of the intellectual element. The general conclusions of that chapter will, of course, incidentally cover the beginnings of drama in Europe. Keeping in mind the general tenor of that chapter we can now pass to another phase of dramatic development,—the literary side; from that standpoint the drama of Europe begins with Greek drama. Aeschylus, our earliest extant dramatist, had of course forerunners whose work and influence we shall attempt to trace although not a line of their literary work (if indeed they ever reached the literary stage) is extant. We shall devote this chapter to clearing up some of the obscurity which clouds the names of these forerunners. We shall allow the literary investigators to present their case precisely as in the earlier chapter the anthropologists were invited to tell us what they had learned about primitive drama.

The real beginning of the drama of Europe is, then, to be found in ancient Greece; these beginnings like those of all primitive nations were connected with religious rites and observances.

Gaehde in his brochure *Das Theater* inclines to the radical belief that drama is really older than any religious cult; that it arose in the primitive impulse of the primeval race to express their feelings in pantomime and that it began at the moment when these primitive men felt the first urge to express their joy and their sorrow long before they had formed any concep-

tion of a divine being to whom they could pray. When first conceived by men these gods were, Gaehde thinks, merely symbolical personifications of the natural forces, some helpful, some hurtful, with which men were already familiar in their daily lives. This dramatic mimicry by the early man was later performed at religious festivities as well as on other occasions; these primitive dramatic performances were capable of development precisely as the religious festivities at which they were now given were subject to greater elaboration. The statement that drama invariably originated in religious ritual is therefore, Gaehde thinks, only in part true; the real origin antedated the establishment of any religious exercises.

In Greece, at any rate, so far as we can trace it, drama appears to have originated in the worship of Dionysus, the god of wine; but we must never forget that Dionysus was also a patron of the Muses and of the arts. At the festivities of Dionysus, especially at the time of the vintage, the cultivators and harvesters of the grape came together in a jolly assembly which occasionally gave extravagant expression to its joy; in such a mood they roamed about in drunken revelry celebrating the bounty of the giver of the vine. The strollers in these processions mocked the passers-by, nor did they spare the unlucky onlookers who were standing in the immediate neighborhood. All this jollity was at first impromptu; in the course of time these extempore songs and orgiastic dances passed under the control of a chorus leader, whose duty it was to see that the songs were properly sung by a trained choir; to the best chorus a prize was awarded; appropriately enough the award was a well filled wine skin. It is probable that it early occurred to these witty Greek revelers to mimic in caricature certain of the persons whom they felt the urge to ridicule; possibly a dialogue took place between the leader of the choir and the actor who represented the victim of the satire. Improvised at first the banter may later have taken on a studied metrical form, and it may gradually have developed into regular comedy. Gaehde accepts without question the etymology of comedy as "the song of the revelers"; in fact his entire imaginative sketch

of the rise of comedy as we have outlined it is based upon this etymology rather than the rival theory of the meaning of the word,—"village song."

We should remember that Dionysus was to the Greeks something more than the god of wine; to them he was also the creative force of nature; it was Dionysus who in the spring awakened the slumbering earth; in the summer his friendly and beneficial spirit presided over the teaming fields; at the beginning of winter he sadly withdrew into himself.

Dionysus was a roving god. The Greeks did not think of him as remaining majestically on his throne like the Olympian Zeus; Dionysus maintained slight personal relations with his Olympian colleagues; he was ever on the march surrounded by a cohort of vine-clad maenads and goat-footed satyrs. His migrations were enlivened by a noisy accompaniment of drums, cymbals and flutes. In his honor were sung artistic choral songs; in the spring these songs celebrated his joyous entrance into the world; in the winter they told of his conflicts and his sorrows.

It is practically undisputed that the word "tragedy" literally means in Greek "goat-song"; when however we seek a reason for calling a certain kind of dramatic performance a "goat-song" we find that critics are not in agreement. Two explanations are offered; the first is that the performance was named "goat-song" because to the best singer a goat was given as a prize; the other suggested origin is the goat-like costume which the singers wore. Of these suggestions the second is generally accepted today, but Flickinger in his book on the Greek Theater [1] calls attention to the fact that the "goat as a prize" explanation dates from very early times, and until recently was universally adopted; as far back as the third century B.C. we find in the famous Parian Chronicle (*Marmor Parium*) the statement that a goat was given as the prize. Flickinger can find no valid reason for rejecting this ancient explanation of the meaning of the word "goat-song."

[1] The Greek Theater and Its Drama, Roy C. Flickinger, Chicago University Press.

In discussing the origin of Greek drama it is temptingly easy to follow the accepted and traditional lines of interpretation, and to ignore the modern controversies. The current philological journals and especially the thought-provoking book of Professor Flickinger compel us to face new viewpoints which challenge age-long accepted doctrines; we have seen Gaehde in his book *Das Theater* boldly assert that the origin of drama is older than the earliest religious rites.

When we take up the question of the Greek *Dithyramb* we at once find ourselves confronted by a clash between the ancient and the modern viewpoints. We may, however, start with one assertion which has as yet met with little, if any, protest: "Tragedy had its origin in a choral performance and it gradually acquired its historic features."

A second assertion meets with but minor opposition: "Tragedy was originally improvisation, and was developed from the leaders of the Dithyramb"; these words are a literal translation of a statement by Aristotle in his *Poetics*. Note that in both these assertions we have made no mention of Dionysus. We come next to a definition of the *Dithyramb*. Here again we find a fairly unanimous agreement but in opposition are some influential scholars. The *Dithyramb* was a song and dance by a chorus of fifty men in honor of Dionysus. The essential element of this performance was that it was in honor of the god Dionysus; ancient authorities are agreed on this; as early as the second century B. C. we find the lyric poet Archilochus declaring that 'he knew how, when his brain was inspired by wine, to lead the beautiful song, the *Dithyramb* of prince Dionysus"; Plato in his *Laws* speaks of "another kind of song, the birth of Dionysus, the so-called *Dithyramb*."

It is just here that we find our first serious protest by modern scholars. Ridgeway, despite the testimony of Archilochus and Plato, refuses to admit any connection between the *Dithyramb* and Dionysus; he traces the *Dithyramb* back to ritualistic rites at the tombs of heroes; this so-called tomb theory of Ridgway is the cause of much writing and angry dissent among critics; several modern scholars are, however, in-

clined to find the origin of drama in ritualistic ceremonies of various kinds. In support of their contention they cite the Greek noun which is the basis of the English word "drama"; the Greek word "drama" means "something done," "a deed," "an act," "a duty which one fulfills"; in its primary sense it has no special connection with the theater. Any act "performed" or "done" is "drama"; ritualistic rites performed at a tomb are "something done," and hence according to this school of critics are "drama." Whatever we may think of Ridgeway's tomb theory we must give him and his followers credit for adroitness in the use of language. Ridgeway is not alone in his attempt to trace tragedy to a source other than the *Dithyramb;* Dietrich derives it from various sources including funeral laments, and the Eleusinian mysteries. We might add as an additional proposed "origin" Miss Harrison's *Spirit of the Year* theory, but we advise no one but a Phi Beta Kappa classical scholar of mature age and a firm grip on his vocabulary to attack her profound book.

Professor Capps in his excellent manual *"From Homer to Theocritus"* says that "the *Dithyramb* came to be employed exclusively in the worship of Dionysus, the god of wine." This statement is of course essentially true, as true as the conventional parallel statement that the Greek drama was used exclusively in the worship of Dionysus. In both cases we should keep in mind important qualifications; first, the themes of Greek drama ultimately ceased to have any connection with Dionysus; second, as early as about the close of the sixth century B. C. the *Dithyramb* did, occasionally at least, treat of themes not connected with Dionysus; thus the Greek lyric poet, Simonides of Ceos, (ca. 556-468) composed a *Dithyramb* with the title *Memnon.* We may accept, with these qualifications, Capps' statement that the *Dithyramb* was originally extemporaneous and was confined to the worship of Dionysus.

At the close of a trilogy (three tragedies) in the theater at Athens, a satyr-drama was performed; the four plays collectively formed what was termed a "tetralogy." The satyr-drama was a rollicking burlesque with a chorus made up of satyrs,

the half-human, half-animal creatures who were supposed to form the retinue of Dionysus as he roamed over the fields from one site of his worship to another; the satyrs had the legs, ears, flat nose, and shaggy hair of the goat; the rest of their body was in human form.

The leading characters of the satyr-drama were sometimes tragic heroes and kings, sometimes strange mythological personages whose peculiarities furnished opportunity for humorous treatment. A satyr-drama required careful handling; in some of these dramas we know that the hero who had previously been treated seriously and with respect in the regular tragedies was reintroduced in the satyr-drama in a ridiculous light. Various reasons have been assigned for this strange mixture of tragedy and burlesque in the same program. One practical reason was the necessity of providing a relaxation for an audience harrowed by three successive tragedies; constantly throughout our Story of the Drama we find this introduction of comic relief in serious programs. The Greek dramatic code did not permit a mixture of the tragic and the comic in a play; hence the comic relief after the tragic strain. This explanation is practical rather than scientific. Some first-class scholars approach the question from a different angle; at first the dramatic themes were confined to the adventures of Dionysus; the service was dedicated exclusively to that divinity; when dramatic themes in no way connected with Dionysus became the usage, the Greeks faced the anomaly of a religious service with no mention of the deity to whom the service was dedicated; it was, then, a latent feeling that the program should in some way recognize its patron deity, which led to the invention of the satyr-drama after the tragedy. The themes of even the satyr-drama were not necessarily connected with Dionysus; we know, for instance, that after the three tragedies of Aeschylus, which formed the trilogy called the *Oresteia*, the satyr-drama which followed was entitled *Proteus*, a theme in no way connected with Dionysus. Nevertheless in its chorus, at least, the satyr-drama had an organic connection with the original worship of the god to whom the services were dedicated; the chorus

was always made up of the satyrs who had formed the original satyr-chorus of Dionysus. The audience was thus reminded of the early period of the Dionysiac worship out of which tragedy had grown; when the Athenians streamed out of the theater at the close of a long day's performance they could not justly apply to the program as a whole the stock reproach which was leveled at any irrelevancy,—"this has nothing to do with Dionysus."

We may broach, though we need not discuss, the intricate question whether or not satyr-drama is an intermediate stage of drama between the *Dithyramb* and full-fledged tragedy. The theory that satyr-drama was a connecting link, first set forth by the German Welcker in 1826, has found wide acceptance. According to Welcker the original name *Dithyramb* was changed to satyr-drama when the *Dithyramb* had become more dramatic and had taken on a semblance of literary form. Still later when an actor was introduced into satyr-drama, that name gave place to *tragoidia*, "goat-song," for at first even after it had become "tragedy" the chorus consisted of satyrs. It was Aeschylus, according to Welcker, who by abandoning this chorus of goat-like satyrs elevated tragedy to the plane of genuine literature. Flickinger thinks that it would be difficult to find an authoritative modern scholar who accepts this theory of Welcker.

Agreed in rejecting Welcker's scheme critics cannot unite on a substitute theory. Flickinger's own view is that tragedy and satyric drama are independent offshoots of a common source,—the *Peloponnesian Dithyramb;* Tragedy reached Athens from Corinth and Sicyon in the Peloponnesus by way of Icaria in Attica; satyr-drama came to Athens at a time somewhat later than tragedy; it was brought directly from Phlius in Argolis to Athens by Pratinas, a native of Phlius.

Precisely as the trained literary student accepts without question the existence of a long series of epic bards before Homer, so he is certain that Aeschylus inherited his art from predecessors. Of these earlier dramatists two only, Arion and Thespis, are sufficiently well known to warrant notice.

Arion of Corinth lived about 600 B. C.; his dramatic innovation consisted of putting his Dithyrambic chorus of fifty men into the costume of satyrs and of having them sing, while wearing this costume, the sufferings and adventures of their leader, the god Dionysus. Here was taken an important step in the development of dramatic art,—impersonation. In dressing his Dithyrambic chorus in the costume of the goat-like satyrs, he had really fixed for all time the name of the species of poetry which grew out of the *Dithyramb;* the Greek word for goat,—*tragos,* is a component part of the word "tragedy," which means "goat-song."

The next recorded step in the development of dramatic art was taken about fifty years after the innovation of Arion, by a native Attic poet, Thespis. His innovation consisted in the introduction of an actor distinct from the chorus; this single actor stepped out from the other members of the chorus and recited some lines or verses to his satyr colleagues; a simple innovation, apparently, but really of vast importance, for here we have the germ of both acting and dialogue; when Aeschylus added a second actor, entirely distinct from the chorus, dialogue became possible; modern drama had entered on its long future career and the days of the chorus as the sole participants in the performance were numbered.

We wish it were possible to give details regarding a certain Epigenes of Sicyon, because Suidas the lexicographer considers him "the first tragic poet" and, surprisingly enough, calls Thespis the sixteenth in order after Epigenes; he is frank enough, however, to add that some put Thespis second after Epigenes, while still others call him the first tragic poet.

The reader who has carefully followed the attempt to trace drama back to the first man may wonder why the chapter on drama is placed so far along in the standard manuals of Greek literature, after epic and lyric poetry have been fully discussed. He is still more puzzled when in so excellent a work as Capps' "*From Homer to Theocritus*" he reads these words: "The Greek drama presupposes both the epic and the choral lyric, the subject-matter and inspiration of the former, the religious

and structural elements of the latter, adopting at the same time for the dialogue the iambic form which had already been perfected by Archilochus." The question instantly suggests itself: "If drama goes back to the first man, how can it presuppose the epic and the choral lyric?" A fair question deserving an answer. It is true that the standard manuals of Greek literature invariably begin with the epic poetry of Homer; passing next to the lyrics of Archilochus, Sappho, and other writers of that species of poetry, they finally reach Greek drama. There can be no doubt that chronologically the Homeric written epics preceded the lyrics of Archilochus and that the dramas of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides were as a whole written later than the epics or the lyric poems. These facts might easily lead us to the conclusion that Greek poetry had its origin in the epic, that after epic had flourished and declined, lyric poetry came into existence, giving way in the course of time to drama. This conclusion, though apparently sound, is based upon the false premise that poetry and literature are synonymous terms. Poetry and literature are not identical; poetry may have flourished for centuries before it found its expression in literature. Webster clearly recognizes a distinction between poetry and literature; in his various definitions of literature it is noticeable that the word "writings" occurs as an essential element of the term; thus he defines literature as: "The total of preserved writings belonging to a given language or people." . . . "Literature is now used chiefly of writings distinguished by artistic form or emotional appeal." A careful comparison of Webster's definitions of poetry and literature will show that there may be poetry which has not yet found its way into literature; an essential of poetry according to Webster is "language"; an essential of literature is "writing." The origin of the word "literature" is the Latin "littera," *a written sign or mark signifying a sound.*

Poetry in speech or song may have existed long before the invention of writing; it seems probable that each species of spoken or sung poetry had reached a certain degree of perfection before it made its appearance in literature; stu-

dents of primitive poetry claim that in the case of every nation which possesses a literature we must assume that before this literature came into existence there was an earlier period in which non-literary poetry, that is, poetry not yet reduced to written form, had existed. The *Iliad* of Homer marks the beginning of the literature not only of Greece but of Europe; yet the *Iliad* as a poem came into existence long before writing was used for literary purposes. There are no remains of any Greek literature before Homer, yet there must have been poets before his day who sang their hymns in honor of the gods; a careful examination of the *Iliad* reveals abundant evidence of the existence of prehistoric songs and dirges,—marriage songs, dirges for the dead, laments for the passing of summer.

The anthropologists have forced us to make a change in the traditional chronological order of epic, lyric, drama. Busse,[1] and others with him, insist that the epic at once loses its claim as the oldest form of poetry, for it lays chief stress on the history of a particular nation, or a particular race, and this assumes a differentiation of humanity into nations or races and necessarily implies a considerable advance in civilization. Busse and others claim that lyric poetry assumes a still greater advance, for the poetic consideration of an individual's moods and feelings is less primitive than the treatment of the history of a nation or a race.

In view of the almost universal agreement that drama in the unliterary form preceded either unliterary epic or lyric we need not take seriously Victor Hugo's amazing *Preface* to his *Cromwell*, in which he chronologically arranged the pre-literary stages of the three branches of poetry as lyric, epic, drama. The well-informed student of drama is in doubt whether he should admire the reckless audacity of Hugo in his slashing manifesto for Romanticism or laugh at the jaunty way in which he twists to his purpose facts that stubbornly point in the opposite direction.

In tracing drama back to primeval man we need not quarrel with those who insist that side by side with this primitive un-

[1] Bruno Busse: Das Drama, Leipzig, 1910.

literary drama went primitive unliterary lyric and epic poetry. The reader must remember the danger accompanying any rigid scheme of exclusive classification. It is easy enough to show, for instance, that the lyric and the drama went side by side in early times; the lyric feeling of joy and sorrow and the mimic expression of that joy and sorrow were simultaneous. The psychologist will perhaps insist that the feeling must have preceded the expression even though the expression followed instantly as the thunder crash follows the lightning flash.

Chapter IX

AESCHYLUS

Biographers of Shakespeare often remark on the scantiness of authoritative data regarding the private life of Shakespeare the man, in comparison with that available for Shakespeare the writer. If this be true regarding an author who has been dead only three centuries, how much may we fairly expect to know concerning a man who died more than twenty-three hundred years ago? What sources are available regarding the life and death of a long-departed literary man? For every such investigation the sources of information are three: a mass of tradition varying in value from the worthless to the essentially true; reference to the author by other writers, contemporary or nearly so; the works of the author himself. We have available in the case of Aeschylus as well as Shakespeare, material under all these heads.

Of the ancient authors who mention Aeschylus a few are of high authority; two of these are Aristotle the scientific investigator, and Aristophanes the Athenian comic poet. Aristotle was born about seventy years after the death of Aeschylus; Aristophanes was even closer as a contemporary. A third writer, the Roman poet Horace, who was born 65 B. C., four hundred and sixty years after the birth of Aeschylus, gives us a statement or two regarding the dramatic innovations of Aeschylus. Two very late writers who mention him are Athenaeus (third century A. D.), and Themistius (fourth century A. D.). The value of Athenaeus as an authority may be estimated by his vague statement that Aeschylus found the inspiration of his poetry in wine. This may mean either that Aeschylus found his inspiration in the worship of the god Dionysus or that he was personally addicted to drink; in

neither sense is the statement of any special value. Several facts may be gleaned from the *Life of Aeschylus* appended to the oldest extant manuscript of the *Agamemnon* of that author, the so-called *Medicean*, dating from the eleventh century and now in Florence. From the mass of traditions regarding Aeschylus we may extract a few statements which may contain a grain of truth.

In studying the tragedies of Aeschylus as a source of material for reconstructing his life we find ourselves baffled by the personal reticence which also confronts us in the plays of Shakespeare. Certain writers, the Roman Horace for example, give us in their works a wealth of reminiscence from which we can construct a fairly complete sketch of their lives. From the plays of Aeschylus as from those of Shakespeare we derive astonishingly little in the way of definite facts; yet, in a broader sense, the works of these writers clearly manifest their personality. Shakespeare's plays reveal a genial, wide-awake, witty man of the world, ever on the hunt for a good subject, utilizing even a current news topic, as shown in his *Tempest*, based upon the story of some sailors who had recently returned to London after shipwreck on Bermuda,—"The Still-vex'd Bermoothes." But of Shakespeare himself, his home life, his experiences in London, he is strangely reticent; yet even in his reticence his personality stands out clearly to the wise searcher; his references to hunting and the staghounds betray the man who had himself followed the hounds; in Hamlet's advice to the players we perceive the practical actor giving advice to his fellows. Aeschylus, like Shakespeare, unconsciously reveals his personality in his tragedies; stern, rugged, devout, his plays reflect a religious spirit that meditated profoundly upon divine things and tried to justify the ways of God to man. Now and then we catch a more distinct glimpse of his personality. Precisely as Shakespeare unconsciously reveals himself as a huntsman and as a practical actor, so Aeschylus handles war-themes with the touch of an army veteran; his plays are ample confirmation of the recorded facts of his service in the Greek army during the Persian Wars, that "World War" of ancient times.

The date of his birth seems well attested as 525 B. C. This puts him well before his great successors, Sophocles, born 490 B.C., and Euripides, born 480 B.C. Thirty-five years or forty-five years do not seem to us moderns a very long period, but during these three or four decades momentous changes took place in the political conditions, the religious viewpoint, of the Athenians. All these changes faithfully reflect themselves in the works of the successors of Aeschylus.

Though Aeschylus was an Athenian he was not born within actual sight of the Acropolis, the "Golden Dome," as a native-born Bostonian might say. His actual birthplace was a suburb of Athens, several miles out from the center, Eleusis by name. It meant something to be born in Eleusis, just as, thirty-five years later, it meant much to Sophocles to be born in another suburb of Athens,—ivy-clad, nightingale-haunted Colonus. Eleusis, home of the religious "Mysteries," center of the cult of the goddess Demeter; Eleusis, frequented yearly by a procession of worshipers attending the annual initiation of neophytes into the sacred rites of the revered goddess; mysteries so sacredly guarded that to this day we do not know the real secret of the rites. Now and then an Athenian was accused of divulging these *arcana,* and it went hard with him if he was convicted. Just here we have a sample "tradition" concerning Aeschylus. From a Greek writer, Heraclides Ponticus (fourth century B. C.), we learn that Aeschylus while acting in one of his own plays made a reference to the goddess Demeter; to the audience, practically all of whom were initiates, the sentence seemed a manifest revelation of the secrets of the cult. They rose in a fury which boded death to the traitor. The poet, panic-stricken, fled to the altar of Dionysus in the center of the orchestra and pleaded sanctuary. For the moment he was safe; an act of violence in the sacred theater of the god Dionysus was sacrilege punishable with death. His troubles began when he abandoned his refuge; he was at once haled before the august court of the Areopagus—the "Mars Hill" where Saint Paul stood centuries later. The Charge, "Profanation of the Mysteries." The Defense, "Pure Ignorance. I did

not know that what I said was secret." The Verdict, Acquittal. But, adds one commentator, "the army record of the poet at Marathon, and the prowess of his brother in the same battle were the real causes of his acquittal." Later additions and embellishments were made to the story, but, in the form here given, it dates as far back as the fourth century B. C. The main facts of the incident seem to be accepted by Aristotle and hence we may regard the tradition as essentially authentic. Some critics find in the splendid tribute which Aeschylus pays to the Court of the Areopagus in his *Eumenides* (458 B. C.), an expression of the gratitude which he felt toward that court for acquitting him of the charge of profaning the mysteries.

The Athenians laid stern stress upon a man's ancestry. From what forefathers did our poet spring? Athens was a democracy and such a question seems irrelevant; but Athens was not the only democracy ancient or modern in which rigid caste systems have prevailed. There were blue-blood democrats and low-born democrats just as in modern democracies. No American *Mayflower* descendant cherishes his pedigree more devoutly than did the Athenian "First Families." Aeschylus and Sophocles were of the Athenian "Four Hundred." Euripides, the third member of the dramatic triumvirate, was regarded as of humble origin. Aristophanes never wearies of his jibes at the vegetable-peddling mother of Euripides, a libel as we show in a later chapter. We know the name and the pedigree of the father of Aeschylus; the name, Euphorion, was aristocratic even in its etymology; this father, Euphorion, was one of the Eupatridae, the old nobility of Athens.

Well-born, well-brought-up, well-educated, intellectually and religiously, the only thing needed to complete the training of young Aeschylus was a trip abroad. But the Athenians were not addicted to travel; roads were bad, sea journeys were uncomfortable and dangerous; why travel unless obliged to do so on business or on diplomatic errands? What was there to see outside of Athens,—the most splendid city in the world? Why go to a foreign country where the people could not speak Greek or understand it? Anyone who tried to express himself

in any language but Greek was a "barbarian,"—that is, his words sounded to Greek ears like "ba-ba-ba." In spite of the general repugnance to travel we hear of some notable travelers. Herodotus and Thucydides journeyed extensively and each wrote a famous history embodying his observations or experiences abroad. But both these men went abroad perforce as the result of political troubles which drove them into exile. Herodotus, from Halicarnassus in Asia Minor, journeyed extensively in foreign lands, and he has left us an immortal account of the Persian Wars and of the various countries concerned in that war; Thucydides, an Athenian general in the Peloponnesian War (431-404 B. C.), paid the penalty of exile for losing a naval battle, but he made such good use of his enforced life abroad that his History of the Peloponnesian War is one of the world's great books. These men, genuine Greeks, would probably have never traveled into foreign lands had not military duties or political troubles forced them from home. Plato the Philosopher and Aeschylus the Dramatist felt the *Wanderlust* and both made for Syracuse, the only city in the world which could at that time make any pretensions of rivalry with Athens in architecture and in literature; Aeschylus first, and Plato a generation afterward.

Why did Aeschylus leave Athens? His first trip to Syracuse was in response to an invitation from Hiero I, tyrant of Syracuse. A "tyrant" in ancient Greece was a man who had managed to acquire, without previous consent of the citizens, absolute control over a town. Unlike our modern meaning of the word it carried to the ancient Greeks no necessary connotation of a misuse of power. By the very act of arbitrary acquisition of authority a man became a "tyrant"; he might use his power benevolently, he migh govern brutally, crushing all malcontents and using his resources for purely personal ends. This Hiero I, tyrant of Syracuse, was endeavoring to make of his city a new literary center, eclipsing even famous Athens. It was as though wealthy and ambitious Chicago were luring from Boston the men who were giving literary dominance to the historic Hub. Literary men in those days were not unsusceptible to the gleam

of gold; we know of one famous Greek lyric poet who when asked to write an epinician ode on the victory won by a team of mules haughtily refused to demean himself by writing on so humble a theme as a mule-team; but when the owner of the mules repeated the request and backed it by a tempting financial offer the poet reconsidered and glorified them in magnificent style. In the year 476, or thereabouts, when Aeschylus was nearly fifty, and already celebrated, Hiero invited him to come to Syracuse; he assured him that he would find himself in famous company. Among those invited at about the same time were Pindar, Bacchylides, Simonides, stars of the first magnitude. There was a special reason for the invitation at this time; Hiero had captured and destroyed Catana, and had expelled the inhabitants; on the site of the destroyed city he had erected a new town, which he proposed to call Aetna, a reminder of the giant volcano on whose slope the old and the new city nestled. Hiero invited Aeschylus to write a play in celebration of the founding of the new settlement; in response Aeschylus wrote and exhibited his play *The Women of Aetna*. So well pleased was he with his first trip that he paid two subsequent visits to the famous city. His second journey was caused, some critics think, by the latent hostility which he had to face at Athen even after his acquittal by the Areopagus on the charge of revealing the Eleusinian mysteries. Another reason alleged by some though denied by others as unworthy of Aeschylus was his profound chagrin at his unexpected defeat in 468 by a new rival, Sophocles, a youth of only twenty-two.

When he made his last trip he had nearly reached the scriptural allotment of three score years and ten. He was destined to close his earthly career in that historic region; he died in Sicily in 456 B. C., at the age of sixty-nine. In narrating the recorded cause of his death we find ourselves beyond the line of history and well into the domain of tradition and legend. He had been warned by an oracle: "A stroke from heaven shall slay thee"; this reported warning is no more incredible than the soothsayer's caution to Julius Caesar: "Beware the Ides of

March." But the reported fulfillment of the prediction taxes our credulity. We are told that while he was walking along the shore an eagle that had snatched up a tortoise let it drop; it fell upon the head of Aeschylus and killed him. In its simple form an ingenious and not altogether improbable story; but in the hands of a later embellisher it becomes a masterpiece of "nature faking." According to this chronicler the eagle was about to drop the tortoise because its shell baffled the eagle; but noting the bald head of Aeschylus far below and mistaking it for a glistening rock the eagle dropped the tortoise upon the shining skull of the venerable poet. At any rate Aeschylus died in 456 B. C. and was buried at Gela. We even know the inscription on his tomb: "Beneath this stone lies Aeschylus, son of Euphorion, the Athenian, who perished in the wheat-bearing land of Gela; of his noble prowess the grove of Marathon can speak, or the long-haired Persian who knows it well." The epitaph seems historically attested; the only dispute is over its authorship. The writer of the Medicean *Life* says that it was put on his grave by the people of Gela; two rather late writers ascribe it to Aeschylus himself. It is somewhat difficult for us to imagine the people of far-distant Sicily calling attention to the war record of Aeschylus and omitting all mention of his famous tragedies. It is possible that Aeschylus took more pride in his participation in the notable battle of Marathon than in his literary work. We can imagine a World War veteran prouder of his record in the battle of the Marne than of his subsequent volume of poems. Such considerations induce some critics to ascribe the epitaph to Aeschylus rather than to the people of Gela.

In our desire to bring together the events of his life in Sicily we have postponed consideration of the war record to which his epitaph calls attention. Aeschylus came of patriotic stock. He and his brother had a full share, a glorious part, in the World War which was fought twenty-five hundred years ago to "make the world safe for democracy." Had Persia won the war, Greek independence would have been blotted out. When the Greek youth were called to arms, two of Eupho-

rion's sons responded and proved their mettle. Aeschylus himself took part in four great battles,—Marathon, Artemisium, Salamis, and Plataea; to the Greeks of after-times these names were the full equivalent of our Marne, Château-Thierry, Aisne, and Jutland. The brother of Aeschylus, Euphorion, fell at the head of a gallant storming party; so heroic was his death that the Athenians included his portrait in the battle picture which was exhibited in a public hall in Athens. Aeschylus, the fighting dramatist, was the predecessor of the modern playwrights Dunsany and Masefield.

Though by no means precocious Aeschylus began his dramatic career at a somewhat early age,—twenty-six; when fairly launched on his life work he continued far beyond the age when most dramatists cease to write. Fifty-nine years later, 458 B. C., he proved that his mental vigor was unimpaired by bringing out his great trilogy, the *Oresteia*, comprising the *Agamemnon*, the *Libation Bearers* and the *Eumenides*.

The early productions of Aeschylus were not prize winners; he had to wait until his fortieth year before he won his first tragic victory (485 B.C.). But when fairly started on his triumphant career he swept everything before him for many years; during his entire career he won at least twelve dramatic victories. The number varies in the records; one authority gives it as twenty; Mahaffy limits the number to thirteen, "according to the most credible account." In any case it should be remembered that a tragic "victory" covered a group of four plays,—a "tetralogy." This is equivalent to saying that forty-eight to eighty of the plays of Aeschylus were victorious in competition.

We are told by an ancient chronicler that Aeschylus wrote in all ninety plays. If Aeschylus actually won twenty victories, eighty of his plays out of ninety must have been regarded by his judges as superior to any of those of his competitors, a phenomenal record in those days of eager dramatic rivalry. Of the ninety plays which he is said to have written only seven survive. By a curious coincidence the same number seven sums up

the surviving work of Sophocles; not a large number certainly in either case, but an ample evidence of the characteristics of the two dramatists. Fate has treated Shakespeare more kindly than it has handled Aeschylus and Sophocles; yet perhaps after all the more fortunate lot is that of the two ancient Greek writers. The difficulty of multiplying manuscripts in those days when the only known means of duplicating a book was by laborious hand copying naturally led the copyists to make selection of the masterpieces; the other plays gradually fell into neglect and finally disappeared. The typesetter and the printer have saved for us thirty-seven of the plays of Shakespeare. Suppose Shakespeare had been subjected to the same process of selection as that to which his predecessors were forced to submit; which would be the surviving seven plays of Shakespeare? The answer seems easy, but numerous experiments with college classes reveal an amazing divergence of opinion in the selection of the seven. All lists include *Hamlet*, *Lear*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, but from that point the differences begin. We may be sure that we have today seven masterpieces of Aeschylus and Sophocles. It is not an unreasonable assertion that the fame of Euripides would today be even greater than it is if fate had handed down to us only seven instead of the eighteen which still survive. His dramatic average is sensibly reduced by the presence among the eighteen of a few that were mercilessly ridiculed by the critics of his own day.

In view of the fact that the beginnings of Greek drama date from the prehistoric ages of the Greek nation and that we have a record of several dramatic innovators (Arion and Thespis, for example) who preceded Aeschylus, it may seem rash to call Aeschylus the founder of Athenian tragedy as does Lewis Campbell in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, but it can be shown that the designation is not unwarranted. From various ancient sources we have a mass of material attesting the radical innovations which Aeschylus made in drama. Concisely stated, some of the more important are: the introduction of a second actor, the improvement in masks, the new type of dancing, the enlarged use of properties, a new style of costume worn by chorus

and actors, a wider choice of subjects. Some of these innovations invite comment.

The Second Actor. By the introduction of this second actor, real dramatic dialogue, independent of the chorus, because for the first time possible. Thespis, as we have seen, had added the first actor to the dramatic performance, a notable addition indeed and a step toward real dramatic dialogue, but not the final step. Sophocles added a third actor, but this was a mere amplification of the innovation of Aeschylus, not a fundamental novelty.

Masks. Certain enthusiastic ancient admirers of Aeschylus claim that he invented the tragic mask. This claim is historically unwarranted; we know, for instance, that Thespis, his predecessor, also wore a mask; in fact the first mummers doubtless wore masks in obedience to the instinct that to this day leads circus clowns to whiten and disguise their faces. Doubtless the earliest actors merely smeared their faces with the purple dregs or lees of the wine which was sacred to the god in whose worship they were participating. Thespis himself we are told simply stained his face in his early career with white lead or the juice of plants; later he adopted a mask but it was of unpainted unstained linen. The innovation of Aeschylus lay in the adoption of painted masks and in giving to them a solemn aspect that awed the spectators; the typical tragic mask as we see it today on our theater programs is a lineal descendant of the tragic mask which Aeschylus fashioned.

Dancing. Aeschylus did not introduce dancing into dramatic performances. Far from it. The very first choral song in honor of Dionysus must have been accompanied by dancing; song and dance were the two essentials of primitive worship. He introduced solemnity into the tragic dances which in his day were inclined to the lively and the boisterous; in training his choruses he insisted on the solemn and the decorous; his example was long followed.

Properties. By properties we mean everything on the stage except scenery and costume. Greek settings, like those of the Elizabethan period, were extremely simple, but a certain num-

ber of devices were needed to indicate the locality and to make clear the subject-matter of the play. If, for instance, the background of the theater depicted a temple, it was customary to place in front of it a statue of the deity to whom the shrine was dedicated. Statues of gods were frequently placed also before the palaces of kings. The more common contrivances with which Aeschylus was credited included statues, altars, tombs. Some examples of the properties employed by Aeschylus are: In the *Eumenides* he placed a statue of Athena before her temple; in the *Supplices* the maidens flee to an altar for refuge; in the *Persae* he introduced the tomb of Darius; in the *Libation Bearers* the sepulcher of Agamemnon; in the *Agamemnon* a horse or mule-drawn chariot containing Agamemnon and Cassandra entered the orchestra; in the *Prometheus* Oceanus entered upon a winged horse.

Costumes. Once more we must dispute the claim of an original invention for Aeschylus; it is quite unnecessary to credit him with originating the garment worn by the tragic actors. There is an intimate connection between religious rites and a distinguishing costume; we see it today in the churches of many creeds and faiths. Probably the earliest votaries of Dionysus wore a special garb at the time when they disguised their faces. What we may claim for Aeschylus is that in the long flowing costume which he devised he set a pattern which subsequent dramatists followed. We have vivid testimony to the startling innovations which he introduced into tragic dress. In the *Eumenides* he attired the furies in black; as they rushed into the orchestra their distorted masked faces and their snake-entwined hair petrified the audience with horror. In connection with costume we may mention his addition to the thickness of the sole of the tragic boot,—the *cothurnus*, thereby increasing the bodily height of the actor.

No translation can do full justice to Aeschylus. His plays when read in the original Greek are often baffling to advanced scholars. To the boldness of the imagery, the vast vocabulary, "the desperate compounds" as Professor Mahaffy calls them, must be added the wretched condition of the text as it has come

down to us. Yet even in a good translation the careful reader can confirm in part the eulogies showered on Aeschylus: "Deep religious feeling; dramatic power; sublime poetry; grandeur; gigantic power of conception." "No other poet among the Greeks either in grandeur of conception, or splendor of execution, equals the untranslatable, unapproachable, inimitable Aeschylus," says the late Professor Mahaffy. We may give an illustration or two; here and there occur thrilling contrasts between the tragic and the æsthetically lovely. In the *Prometheus* the martyr, chained to his rock, hears the whirring of wings as a group of nymphs sweeps up to console the sufferer. Again, it would be difficult to match the skill of Aeschylus in arousing in his reader a shuddering certainty of impending doom. The slow inevitability of the approach almost paralyzes the imagination with dread. An example is found in the prophetic words of Cassandra as she enters the palace of death.

A word regarding the diction of Aeschylus. The Greek language lends itself with remarkable facility to the formation of compound words; in this respect it is strikingly like the German tongue. Unless the reader of the Greek text has a thorough knowledge of the primary meaning of Greek roots he is obliged to consult his lexicon in practically every line, especially in the choruses; the papyrus rolls of lost Greek authors, recovered in Egypt in recent years, are bristling with compounds which had not up to the time of the discovery of the manuscripts been noted in Liddell and Scott's *Greek Lexicon.* To a cynic Aeschylus's pompous compounds and bold metaphors invite raillery. The metaphor, "dust the twin brother of mud," taxes the risibilities even of his warmest admirer. That great wit, Aristophanes, was just the man to seize the opportunity to cavil. For Aeschylus, the upholder of the old religion, Aristophanes, the conservative, had a profound admiration; but that did not prevent him from burlesquing in one of the most delicious bits of fooling in the world's literature the high-flown rhetoric of the poet. The *Frogs* of Aristophanes is priceless as a contemporary criticism of the three great tragic writers—Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.

Greek drama, like all drama, was, as we have shown in an earlier chapter, of religious origin; an Athenian theater-goer was expected to keep this sacred origin in mind, even amid the buffooneries of the satyr-drama and the coarseness and scurrility of comedy. For a Greek tragic writer to scoff at or even to ignore the god to whom drama owed its origin was an act of impiety that invited punishment. More than once a tragic playwright who uttered sentiments which to the critical audience savored of impiety had to bring his play to a sudden close. It was at first a risky adventure even to bring out a play which was not primarily concerned solely with the life and adventures of Dionysus. The current Athenian proverb: "This has nothing to do with Dionysus" originated in a vocal protest against a play which was not confined to the Dionysiac theme; later it was broadened into a criticism of any public speaker who wandered from his announced topic. Aeschylus necessarily treated religious ideas in his dramas; but a religious theme may be treated in many ways; a dozen modern clergymen may preach on the same text, yet the treatments may radically differ. If we examine carefully the discussion of religious themes by the great tragic writers we shall see how the personality of these men determined their treatment of the subject. The *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus will give us ample material for ascertaining the attitude of the author toward the religion of his day. All through this play we feel the helplessness of man in the presence of Deity. God humbles the proud; man's wealth will not give him escape from the judgment-bar of God. But Aeschylus categorically and emphatically rejects the universal belief of the Greeks that Zeus punishes mere prosperity. Not so; it is not wealth which God punishes but the insolence which wealth so often begets. Since, then, wealth usually begets insolence, wealth is a precarious blessing. Life is a solemn thing, a portentous thing; there may be danger lurking in our path; sickness may be waiting to swoop down upon us unprepared; there may be a hidden reef in the smoothest voyage. We should be fearful of Jove's thunderbolt; it loves to strike the exalted and the famous. Agamemnon was obliged by divine

decree to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia; yet by obeying the god he committed an inexpiable crime. How, then, is a mortal man to satisfy the demands of God? Hard it is indeed to reconcile Heaven's ways with man's beliefs. One thing, however, is certain: there is no escape for the man who sins. "The doer must suffer." Thus God teaches man to be wise, and wisdom comes from suffering.

Since the first printed edition of Aeschylus in the sixteenth century (Aldine, 1518), over a hundred scholars have contributed to the correction of the corrupt text of the manuscripts and the elucidation of obscure passages. Unfortunately several lines of the *Agamemnon* are missing in our oldest manuscript, the *Medicean;* it has however been found possible to rescue the lost lines from later manuscripts. Thanks to erudite and industrious scholars the text of Aeschylus is far more intelligible today than it has ever been before, yet the studious reader of the Greek text is still painfully aware of obscurities and obvious errors which baffle the keenest critics.

For the benefit of the English reader we append a brief list of modern English translations of Aeschylus.

The entire seven plays are translated by E. D. A. Morshead and Professor Lewis Campbell.

The *Agamemnon* has been translated by: Symmons; Milman; Conington; Miss Swanwick; J. F. Davies; Professor Blackie.

Two translations of the *Prometheus* are by Mrs. Browning and Robert Browning.

Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* may profitably be read in connection with the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus, but it is original and entirely independent of the play of Aeschylus.

SOPHOCLES.
Portrait Statue, Lateran Museum, Rome.

Chapter X

SOPHOCLES

In taking up the life of Sophocles, the second of the great dramatic triumvirate, we are once more dealing with a man of social standing, of good if not of highly distinguished pedigree, a man who fairly represented the intellectual élite of democratic Athens.

Matthew Arnold has etched him for all time:

> "Be his
> My special thanks, whose even balanced soul,
> From first youth tested up to extreme old age,
> Business could not make dull, nor passion wild;
> Who saw life steadily, and saw it whole;
> The mellow glory of the Attic stage,
> Singer of sweet Colonus, and its child."

Born in 495 B. C., thirty years later than Aeschylus, a momentous generation intervenes between the two men. In his childhood he experienced some of the fright, some of the thrill of the victory which marked the life-and-death struggle of Greece and Persia; by the time the Athenian youth was fifteen the war was practically over, and Sophocles shared the exultation of his countrymen when the last ship of the Persian Armada turned its defeated prow homeward.

The boy's early days were spent in his birthplace, Colonus, a suburb of Athens. *Colonus!* The name still charms the lover of ancient Greece. We think of the shady groves from which the nightingale trilled its plaintive song; of the roses, the ivy, the brooks. How well Sophocles loved his native Colonus he tells us in his play the *Oedipus at Colonus* as translated by Professor Lewis Campbell.

"Friend, in our land of victor steeds thou art come
To this Heaven-fostered haunt, Earth's fairest home,
Gleaming Colonus, where the nightingale
In cool green covert warbles ever clear,
True to the deep-flushed ivy and the dear,
Divine, inviolable shade,
From wildered boughs and myriad fruitage made,
Sunless at noon, stormless in every gale.
Wood-roving Bacchus there, with mazy round,
And his nymph-nurses, range the unoffended ground.
And nourished day by day with heavenly dew
Bright flowers their never-failing bloom renew,
From eldest time Dêô and Cora's crown,
Clustering narcissus, and the golden gleam
Of crocus; while from many a sleepless spring,
Perennial waters duly ministering,
Cephisus, never dwindling down,
Daily, with quickening power,
Pours on boon Earth his sweet, untainted shower.
Her wide breast heaves, thrilled by the gentle stream.
The quiring Muses love to seek the spot,
And Aphrodité's golden car forsakes it not."

Sophillus, the father of Sophocles, was a man of means, owing his wealth to his cutlery manufacturing establishment. The Athenians regarded manual toil as degrading, fit only for slaves, and if practiced by freemen, by those of the lowest social rank; but there was no loss of prestige in carrying on a wholesale or manufacturing business in which the actual work was done by menial hands. That the father was a man of excellent position and of considerable influence may be inferred from his success in securing for his son military and political appointments for which he had shown no particular aptitude.

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We know singularly little about the primary education of Greek celebrities. We learn from Aristophanes and other ancient sources that there were private elementary schools and we have considerable information about the studies and the methods pursued in these schools; but we have only scanty de-

tailed information regarding individual Greek primary-school teachers; we have no counterpart of the "flogging Orbilius" (*plagosus Orbilius*) of the Roman poet Horace's own early days. We may fairly assume that the young Sophocles, like all Greek boys of good families, was conducted to school by the indispensable paidagogos or chaperon who was the companion and guardian of all young Athenian boys of the better class. We get a glimpse of the young lad at the age of fifteen. The glorious news of the victory at Salamis (480 B. C.) had reached Athens. The Greeks in their wild joy did exactly what the Americans did when the news of the World War armistice was flashed across the ocean,—they organized a trimphant procession. A signal honor was conferred on young Sophocles; he was chosen to lead the choral procession. Two reasons for the choice are mentioned by our authorities, each highly significant; the first was his personal beauty; the second was that he was a gifted pupil of Lamprus, a famous music teacher of Athens. The choice of a young man for his beauty is a preëminently Greek touch; the Greeks instinctively associated beauty of person with beauty of character. The physical plainness of Socrates the philosopher provided ammunition for the enemies who refused to believe beauty of soul could reside in so unattractive a body. The manly beauty of Sophocles seems attested by his famous portrait statue in the Lateran Museum at Rome, one of the finest which we have inherited from antiquity; it shows a refined, aristocratic face; the elegant pose of the body bespeaks the high-bred, cultured Athenian. The reference to Lamprus attests not only that Sophocles studied music under a master, but by implication it indicates that part of his training consisted of an intimate acquaintance with the Greek lyric poets whose works formed the basis of the musical instruction.

We know that he had a son, Iophon, who followed in his father's footsteps. Scraps of gossip concerning this son may be gathered from the scandalmongers of ancient Greece; Aristophanes hints very plainly and very unscrupulously that young Iophon owed to his father's help a good part of his fame as a tragic writer; at the same time the satirist admits

that Iophon was the only really gifted Athenian tragic poet left after the death of Euripides. Nor should we omit the famous alleged summoning of his aged father before a court on the charge of inability to manage his affairs. As the story runs, Sophocles simply read in his defense the fine chorus from his *Oedipus at Colonus;* in the face of this superb example of mental vigor an acquittal was inevitable.

Of a grandson, the younger Sophocles, we know but little beyond the alleged fact that after his grandfather's death he edited the latter's *Oedipus at Colonus.*

Sophocles, like Aeschylus, was a warrior poet. He was too young to take part in the actual fighting of the Persian Wars, but when he was fifty-five years old, an age when most men are exempt from military service, he was given an appointment as general in the short-lived Samian War (440-439 B. C.). We know of no reason whatever except his own social influence and that of his family for his appointment to so responsible a command. We certainly hear nothing about any previous acquaintance with military matters; one writer hints that it was not because of his military knowledge, but rather in recognition of the political wisdom which he had shown in his play *Antigone;* surely an unsatisfying reason for entrusting to a poet the lives of his countrymen. We should bear in mind that he was not commander-in-chief of the Athenian forces; he was associated with Pericles, a real fighter as well as a real statesman. We have good reasons for believing that the chief did not rate his colleague very highly as a miltary man; there is on record a saying of Pericles that Sophocles succeeded better as a poet than as a commander; putting this judgment into modern phraseology it would run about as follows: "As a general he was a good poet." Sophocles evidently had a keen sense of humor even at his own expense; he never tired of repeating the criticism of his military associate. Another reproof administered by the outspoken commander cut more deeply; recognizing the tendency on the part of the ever susceptible Sophocles to divide his worship somewhat unequally between Ares and Aphrodite, Pericles warned his colleague: "A commander must not only have clean

hands, but an irreproachable eye." A hit, a palpable hit! Sophocles was not as fond of quoting this criticism as the other regarding his lack of qualifications as a general.

We are told by an Alexandrian biographer that Sophocles performed faithfully his share of civic duties and that he even served on foreign embassies, going as far from home as the Ionian cities in Asia Minor; these duties and his extensive travels gave him a broad acquaintanceship and a cosmopolitan outlook on life.

A modern critic has remarked that to have been an actor is a better preparation for writing plays than to have had a college education. Perhaps true, if a young writer must choose between the alternatives. Sophocles had training both as a scholar and as an actor. A Greek dramatist was expected to act in his own plays; Aeschylus had served a full apprenticeship on the stage. A mere accident prevented Sophocles from following precedent; his voice was too weak to carry the sound to the back seats of the enormous open-air theater at Athens with its seventeen thousand auditors. Though he could not play the major rôles there were minor parts which did not require the use of the voice; he could gracefully toss a ball and this ability he displayed in his *Nausicaa;* then, too, he had not lost his skill in playing on the lyre, a skill for which he was doubtless indebted to his old teacher Lamprus; accordingly, he utilized his ability by personally appearing in the cast of his play *Thamyras*.

His old age was spent at Athens. Possibly he went back to his well-loved Colonus; at any rate Colonus figures once more in the incidents of his life. In 411 B. C., when Sophocles was eighty-four years old, a conspiracy known as the "Oligarchical Revolution of the Four Hundred" broke out there and temporarily suppressed the democracy; this was one of the lively episodes of the Peloponnesian War (431-404 B. C.). We have no record of any active participation by Sophocles in this war; indeed, even at the outbreak of that conflict he was sixty-four years old and doubtless beyond the fighting age; but in 411 B. C., though far advanced in life, he was still

sufficiently alert to keep up his political interest in civic affairs; we learn that in this crisis he was selected as one of the ten special counselors appointed to maintain order in the state.

The date of his death is believed to have been 406 B. C. from references to his demise as "recent" in the *Frogs* of Aristophanes which was produced in 405 B. C. He was buried in the family plot about a mile and a half outside of Athens on what was known as the Decelean Way,—that is, the road leading to Decelea.

There is striking unanimity among ancient writers regarding Sophocles' charm,—his urbanity, his ready wit and his sprightliness of manner. It is true that a rival tragic poet (Ion) asserted that he saw nothing remarkable in Sophocles as a public man: "He was like any other reputable Athenian." This may be simply an evidence of the recognized tendency of a certain type of artist to disparage fellow-members of his craft, or it may be substantially true; note that Ion is speaking of Sophocles in his public capacity. We have already called attention to his apparent lack of ability in certain civic functions which he was called upon to perform. Whatever we may think of Sophocles in his public career there can be no doubt regarding his social graces; during his foreign residence in Asia Minor he charmed the Ionians. By all accounts he was of a pronouncedly amorous disposition; we have not only the reported reproof of Pericles in attestation but we have striking corroboration in the *Republic* of Plato where Sophocles is reported as expressing great satisfaction over his relief in old age from the cruel tyranny of Eros. Critics see in the famous *Ode to Love* in the *Antigone* a reflection of Sophocles' own personality. Aristophanes in his *Frogs* predicts that Sophocles will be good-natured and easy-going in Hades for he was good-natured and easy-going on Earth. Additional touches of personality are seen in his piety and his devotion to his native Athens. Literary students are impressed by the remarkable resemblances between the Greek Sophocles and the German Goethe. Both were writers of tragedy; both took part in their own plays; both were of great personal beauty; both

were charmingly graceful when acting on the stage; both were noted for their numerous love affairs.

Sophocles did not confine his literary work to tragedies; he wrote also minor poems, elegies and pæans (songs of praise), but all of this work has perished. Of the more than one hundred plays which he is known to have written only seven remain; we must be content with the titles and scanty fragments of more than ninety which have perished. The preservation of as many as seven is probably due to a selection made for educational purposes at Alexandria, the scholarly literary center of Egypt; even the seven which had been selected were found too extensive for convenient copying. In Constantinople (Byzantium as it was called in earlier times) a still smaller selection of three plays (*Ajax*, *Electra*, *Oedipus Tyrannus*) was for some time in use by students at that center.

The story of his first dramatic victory is of lively interest. For many years the great Aeschylus had downed all opponents in the dramatic arena; but every athlete sooner or later has to submit to the fatal count of the referee. In 468 B. C. Aeschylus was fifty-seven years old; among his competitors was a young rival barely twenty-seven, named Sophocles. The committee of award on this occasion was constituted in a very unusual way; instead of a membership of lay judges, the decision was placed in the hands of a committee of generals, the famous Cimon at the head. This committee awarded, to the first piece which the youthful Sophocles had ever presented, the victory over his elderly and hitherto invincible rival.

We have called Aeschylus the real founder of Athenian drama and we have enumerated his dramatic innovations. Each successor made an addition or two, but they all built on the Aeschylean foundation; thus we learn that Sophocles added a third actor to the stage; with this third actor accretions ended.

Suidas, the lexicographer, informs us that "Sophocles began the practice of pitting play against play, instead of the tetralogy." A blind statement, or false if given the interpretation which the words suggest. It is absolutely incorrect to say that Sophocles ceased to present plays in tetralogies,—

groups of four. The recorded facts are against the assertion. The only possible way of accepting the statement of Suidas is to interpret it as meaning that Sophocles was the first to abandon the custom of having the three tragedies and the satyr-drama on precisely the same theme. Possibly this interpretation is correct. Undoubtedly at an earlier time the plays of a tetralogy, or at least the three tragedies of a trilogy, were on the same theme. The only extant trilogy,—the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus, 458 B. C., proves this. The three plays treat of portions of the same legend, the murder of Agamemnon and the vengeance taken by Agamemnon's son Orestes on Clytemnestra, the guilty wife. The *Agamemnon* relates the murder of Agamemnon by his wife; the *Chœphoroi* tells of the retaliatory murder of Clytemnestra by her son Orestes; the third play, the *Eumenides*, treats of the final pardon and purification of the avenging son, Orestes. Of the satyr-drama which accompanied this trilogy, the *Proteus*, we know nothing but the title; it is difficult to see any connection between the legend of the sea-god *Proteus* and the fated house of Atreus and Thyestes. Possibly, therefore, Sophocles ceased to present groups of plays connected in theme; but tetralogies in some form he certainly did continue to write. We know, further, his successor, Euripides, continued the custom of tetralogies until a period at least as late as the last play of Sophocles.

Sophocles is credited with writing some of his important rôles with certain definite actors in mind. There are difficulties in accepting this statement in view of the known method of selecting the leading actors by lot in order to observe absolute impartiality; but it seems to be the fact that an Athenian poet of established reputation was granted certain concessions in the choice of his own actors. If Sophocles really did write rôles fitted to the personality of chosen actors he was a leader in the long procession of great dramatists who have followed his example, a company including Shakespeare, Marlowe, Molière, Sardou, Rostand, Clyde Fitch, to mention but a few of the host.

Sophocles, like his predecessor Aeschylus, was a devout

and an intelligent believer. He accepted the traditional religion of his native city; he recognized the sovereignty of Zeus; he believed in a future life; he shared the blessed knowledge of those who had been initiated into the mysterious rites of Demeter at Eleusis. But while acknowledging the omnipotence of Fate, his supreme labor as a dramatist was to show the working of this power in humanity. To him the proper study of mankind is man. We do not find in him the challenging spirit which so distinguishes his successor Euripides. He believed in Destiny as did every Greek of his period; he accepted the doctrine as not only a tradition but a fact; but he contemplated the law of Fate in the light of its practical working in human lives. He shows us definite individuals struggling in the grasp of fate; his *Oedipus* arouses pity and fear as we watch his futile struggle to escape the fatal web of Destiny. Sophocles believed that the universe is controlled by Divine Power, though he cannot see this power with the human eye, and though he knows too well that this power is sometimes pitiless; nor can he promise an earthly reward for an earnest God-fearing life,—Antigone could not attest it in her outer life at least. But saddened as he was in the contemplation of the workings of fate in the case of Oedipus his reverence for divine law never faltered. Right is always ultimately supreme but men are unaware of it. Obedience to the eternal law leads to final happiness.

Sophocles chose his themes, not so frequently from Homer as from a group of later epics which formed what was known as the "epic cycle"; in this cycle could be found legends concerning all the leading cities of Greece; probably, too, there was a great body of oral tradition to which he had access. In handling these legends he selected themes that seemed suited for dramatic treatment, and in developing them he followed the principle which Aristotle subsequently laid down in his *Poetics*,—he kept to the essentials of the legend but showed poetic ingenuity in inventing details and plausible variations.

He was sometimes criticized for narrowness and parochialism in his choice of topics, with favoring his native Attica

at the expense of other portions of Hellas. The charge has been disproved by an appeal to facts; of about one hundred subjects which he treated, only fifteen are directly connected with his native Attica; fifteen belong to Argos; twelve concern the Argonautic expedition of Jason; Corinth also has a share in his choice; by far the largest number, thirty, refer to the Trojan War, a war in which Athens was but slightly concerned. It seems proven, therefore, that in his choice he was guided entirely by the dramatic possibilities of the theme.

To the charge of glorifying Athens he might, had he been convicted, have pleaded guilty without a blush. A genuine Athenian dramatist took every opportunity to glorify his native city. Euripides, in his *Medea*, introduces the Athenian Aegeus, at the expense of the probability of his plot, simply to gratify his native audience. Shakespeare did the same for his Elizabethan auditors; even at this late day we can feel something of the thrill which must have gone through the English listeners when the dying John of Gaunt paid his tribute to the country which his son was about to leave for exile.

"This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise;
This fortress built by Nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war;
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands;
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England."

The exiled Bolingbroke's parting apostrophe to the mother-country still makes every British heart tingle:

"Then, England's ground, farewell; sweet soil, adieu;
My mother, and my nurse, that bears me yet!
Where'er I wander, boast of this I can,
Though banish'd, yet a true born Englishman."

Lewis Campbell does not hesitate to place Sophocles at the head of all the tragic poets of the world in perfection of technic. He admits that in particular qualities Sophocles is surpassed by certain of his rivals, ancient and modern; in grandeur by Aeschylus, in expressiveness and fullness by Shakespeare; but Sophocles reigns alone, in Campbell's judgment, in the combination of "simplicity with complexity, of largeness of design with absolute finish, of grandeur with harmony." A study of the technic of Sophocles will confirm this high praise. For the supreme example of his skill we should study his *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the play which Aristotle in his *Poetics* constantly cites for its technical excellence.

Skillful construction is the secret of his workmanship. The essence of Greek drama is concentration upon a single theme, even upon a single characteristic; sub-plots were not in favor in Greek drama. A Greek play often selects a single attribute of its hero and subordinates or eliminates all other human qualities; we still mentally associate but one quality with *Medea*, with *Prometheus*, with *Ulysses*, with *Achilles;* Medea is fierce, Prometheus is stubborn, Ulysses is versatile, Achilles is wrathful. That the ancients themselves recognized this principle of selection of attributes is shown in the well-known line of Horace's *Ars Poetica:*

> "Si forte reponis Achillem,
> Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer,
> Jura neget sibi nata, nihil non arroget armis.
> Sit Medea ferox invictaque, flebilis Ino,
> Perfidus Ixion, Io vaga, tristis Orestes."

Not until the days of the Romanticists were many phases of personality embodied in a single character. Victor Hugo's romantic hero, Hernani, would have appeared strange indeed to an ancient Greek; in his personality as displayed in Hugo's play he manifests hatred, jealousy, revenge, honor, love,—practically the whole gamut of human passion. Yet though Sophocles depicts only a limited range of emotion in each of his characters he is never monotonous; he gives us at least

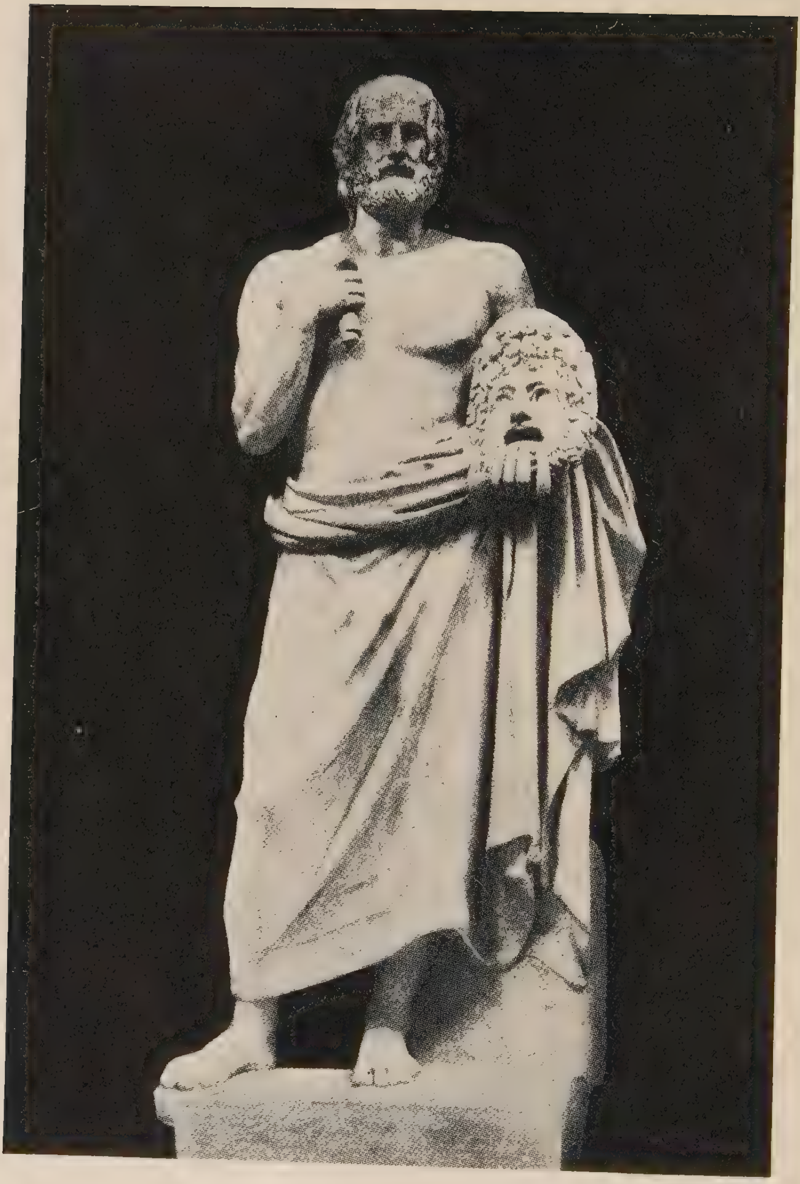
glimpses of other human qualities; Antigone is hard and inflexible yet she loves her sister Ismene; the *Medea* of Euripides is wild with jealousy, yet the tenderness which at fleeting moments she shows for her children moves profoundly even a modern auditor. Achilles in Homer may be "wrathful" yet with an exquisite touch the poet represents the captive Briseis as leaving him reluctantly for her new master Agamemnon.

Attention has often been called to Sophocles' feeling for external nature. The Greeks had a keen eye for natural phenomena. Homer's similes and metaphors are famous; he saw a field of grain billowing before the breeze like the waves of the sea; he noted the forest fires blazing on the side of a mountain; he knew the stars,—Orion and the Pleiades. The lyric poets were impressed by the budding leaves, the flowers of the field,—the rose, the hyacinth, the violet. That Sophocles was a genuine Greek in his response to the beauties of nature, his description of his native Colonus is convincing proof. The one thing we must resolutely guard against is the belief that the Greeks felt a sentimental, moralizing love of nature. Matthew Arnold has uttered the final word on this in his delicate but incisive handling of Mr. Ruskin. Never were wiser words uttered on the real attitude of the Greeks toward nature than these which Mr. Arnold employs in his essay *On Translating Homer.*

"The writer of an interesting article on English translations of Homer, in the last number of the *National Review*, quotes, I see, with admiration, a criticism of Mr. Ruskin on the use of the epithet *Phusizoos*, 'Life-giving,' in that beautiful passage in the third book of the *Iliad* which follows Helen's mention of her brothers Castor and Pollux as alive, though they were in truth dead. 'The poet,' says Mr. Ruskin, 'has to speak of the earth in sadness; but he will not let that sadness affect or change his thought of it. No, though Castor and Pollux be dead, yet the earth is our mother still,—fruitful, life-giving.' " Commenting on the *Review* writer's tribute to Mr. Ruskin's interpretation of the Homeric word, Mr. Arnold continues:— "This is a just specimen of that sort of application of modern

sentiment to the ancients, against which a student, who wishes to feel the ancients truly, cannot too resolutely defend himself. . . . The reader may feel moved as he reads it; but it is not the less an example of 'le faux' in criticism; it is false. It is not true, as to that particular passage, that Homer called the Earth 'Life-giving,' because, 'though he had to speak of the earth in sadness, he would not let that sadness change or affect his thought of it,' but consoled himself by considering that 'the earth is our mother still—fruitful, life-giving.' It is not true, as a matter of general criticism, that this kind of sentimentality, eminently modern, inspires Homer at all."

Two of the earliest editions of Sophocles are: *The Aldus Manutius*, which dates from 1502, and the *Juntine Editions*, which were printed from 1522 to 1547. The English reader may consult three standard translations: In prose, that of R. C. Jebb; in English verse, E. H. Plumptre (1865), and Lewis Campbell (the seven plays with the exception of the *Oedipus at Colonus*).



EURIPIDES.

Portrait Statue, Vatican Museum, Rome.

Chapter XI

EURIPIDES

"Our Euripides the human,
With his droppings of warm tears,
And his touches of things common
Till they rose to touch the spheres"
Mrs. Browning.

We have now reached the third member of the great dramatic triumvirate of ancient Greece. Beginning with Aeschylus the majestic, we passed to Sophocles the perfect artist and we close with Euripides the "human."

When we take up the question of his birth year, we find ourselves confronted with the usual confusion of dates. Most of the biographers assign the year 480 B. C.; an ancient authority gives it as 485 B. C. Fortunately no vital problem is connected with the establishment of the exact date; 480 or 485 B. C. will do equally well for our present purpose; the year 480 B. C. is, however, the more interesting for it gave an opportunity to the poetically-minded Greeks to invent a story to explain a supposed fact. We find this tale bringing together in one event the three tragic writers, and pivoting on the date 480 B. C. and the Battle of Salamis which was fought in that year. According to this tradition Aeschylus fought in this battle, Sophocles, a boy of fifteen, led the triumphant procession in celebration of the victory, and Euripides was born on the island of Salamis on the very day of the contest. A "well found" story, and good enough to be true; too good, probably, to be true.

There seems to be unanimity in our authorities in assigning Salamis as the birthplace of our poet. The reason given is plausible enough,—the alleged fact that his parents with other

Athenians had fled thither to escape the threatened Persian invasion. The ever facile ancient biographers tell us that the boy took such a fancy to his island birthplace that in later life he resorted there to write his tragedies. The legend pictures him sitting in a retired spot,—a cavern, whence he looked out over the sea, brooding, and borrowing many a striking metaphor. True or false this story reminds us of another dramatist separated by more than twenty centuries of time and half a world of space,—Henrik Ibsen, who, likewise, sat looking over the sea, brooding, and while meditating creating a mystical drama, *The Lady from the Sea.*

We know, or at least believe we know, a good deal about his father and his mother. His father, Mnesarchus (or Mnesarchides, as several ancient authorities spell the name), was, according to ancient tradition, a retail trader. His mother, Clito, according to the same tradition, was a peddler of kitchen herbs; no reader of the clever but unscrupulous comic writer Aristophanes can hear the name Clito without picturing Euripides' mother with a basket of vegetables which she is peddling about the marketplace in Athens. If the father Mnesarchus was a petty trader he would in the eyes of the Athenians rank but little higher than his herb-selling wife. Fairly or unfairly, tradition has established for all time the popular conception of the social status of the parents of Euripides. Were these parents really of such humble origin and occupation? At the date of his son's birth the father was an Athenian citizen. Was he a native-born Athenian? Our ancient authorities are a little nebulous on this point; one writer says that the parents were driven from their native land and found refuge in Bœotia, a country contiguous to Athens on the north; they finally established themselves in Attica as resident aliens. An ancient writer plainly states that the father was a Bœotian; we can refute this charge; whenever a comic poet could scent a flaw in the citizenship of his victim he pounced upon it with avidity; the failure of Aristophanes to attack the citizenship of the family of Euripides is significant of the falsity of the assertion.

What was the real social rank of the parents of Euripides? An excellent authority of the Alexandrine period (Philochorus) insists that the jokes of the comic poets on the standing of the father and mother of the poet were malicious fabrications, and that his family was actually of high position. This writer, Philochorus, was serious, scholarly and exact, and in support of his assertion he had access to documents now lost. In the absence of these witnesses can we adduce any proof in support of the statement of Philochorus? Proof both absolute and presumptive, is available. The first evidence is the fact that Euripides owned a library; we are distinctly told that he was one of the very few men in ancient Greece who possessed an extensive collection of books. (Two other Greeks similarly fortunate were Euclid and Aristotle.) The possession of a large library in the time of Euripides was convincing evidence that the owner was both a scholar (or at least a literary man), and a person of substantial financial resources. In those far-off days when manuscripts were laboriously copied by hand, a book cost an appreciable sum; the acquisition of a considerable library involved an outlay quite beyond the resources of a man in humble life. Whence did Euripides obtain the money for these books? Certainly not from the returns of his dramatic work, for he was notoriously unsuccessful in his literary contests; the only financial source which we can imagine is his parents. A positive and conclusive evidence for the high social rank of his family is the fact that Euripides was entrusted with certain religious rôles which were given only to persons of recognized standing. What shall we say about the herb-selling mother? If there was absolutely no point to this story how could Aristophanes have ventured to utter so transparent a slander? Modern apologists attempt to give a satisfactory explanation; one writer suggests that the parents of Euripides had a farm, the products of which were brought to Athens and exposed for sale in the public market; another considers it probable that the mother of the poet had in early life been actually engaged in some humble or menial occupation, but

upon her marriage to a man of good family she had abandoned her former business. A careful examination of the evidence justifies us in concluding that the reports spread by the unscrupulous Athenian comic poets were false, or at least greatly exaggerated, and that our poet came from ancestors of high position. If we attempt to cite authorities for or against Euripides, those who assign him an assured place in Athenian society far outweigh his detractors. A single quotation from Suidas, a representative of the ancient biographers who defend Euripides against his defamers, must suffice: "It is not true that his mother was a seller of vegetables, for she came from eminently respectable parents, as Philochorus attests." Note the high social standing here assigned the mother on the authority of Philochorus. Nor should we fail to lay great emphasis upon the connection of Euripides with certain religious rites of Apollo at Athens; our ancient authorities for the participation of the dramatist in these rites of Apollo make it clear that such participation was limited exclusively to members of ancient families of unquestioned distinction. A careful weighing of the evidence for and against the tradition of the low birth of Euripides and his parents arouses profound indignation at the treatment which he has received at the hands of his posterity. The slanders of unscrupulous and professional character-wreckers have been accepted for centuries; the counter-evidence has been unknown or ignored. The thoughtful scholar who has access to all the facts in the case of Euripides cannot restrain the disquieting doubt whether other men who are on the world's blacklist may not be the victims of similar injustice.

His father was able to give the son a liberal education under expensive teachers (another indication, by the way, of the financial standing of the parents). It took the boy some time to find himself. Before he had settled upon his life work he, like Ibsen, passed through the intermediate stage of an apprenticeship in painting. If the father of Ibsen had not failed in business the boy might have gone to the art schools of Germany, and we should never have had the *Wild*

Duck or the *Master Builder*. Ibsen's paintings outlived him, —it is said that some of them are still shown in his native Norway; those who have seen them report them as respectable works of art though lacking in any striking evidences of genius. Euripides, also, produced some works which were put on exhibition; in fact, he ranked among the talented painters of his day. But though both Ibsen and Euripides abandoned painting to make drama a life work the time spent at the easel was far from wasted; both painters owe to their apprenticeship in painting the artist's eye for detail, the ability to etch in words the scenes which in earlier life they had transferred to their easel. The careful reader of Euripides can here and there detect in his extant plays allusions to painting; in one of them (*Ion*) we find a detailed description of a tapestry at Delphi.

We are told, also, that the boy was given by his father an excellent training in athletics; one of his ancient biographers even asserts that the young athlete won a contest in boxing. The famous portrait statue of Euripides in the Vatican might possibly be cited as at least not refuting the athletic tradition. The muscular arms and the highly-developed chest muscles present a striking contrast to another equally celebrated portrait statue in the Vatican,—that of Demosthenes; the lean arms and the comparatively flat chest of the famous orator strikingly confirm the contemporary jibes at Demosthenes as a "water-drinker," a man whose speeches "smelt of the lamp,"—the products of a studious abjurer of the gymnasium and the athletic grounds. Whether or not Euripides really went in for boxing and other athletic contests of his day, he seems to know a good deal about professional athletes and for these men, if we may judge by a fragment from one of his lost plays, he has little but contempt.

We are always interested in the private life of a literary man; we welcome his letters when published; from them we get a genuine insight into his real personality, an insight that often serves as a corrective of the popular view. Matthew Arnold's letters revealed a geniality, an interest in his fellow-

men, that strangely contrasted with his reputation for coldness and austerity; the real Ibsen, in his pettiness as well as in his greatness, stands pitilessly revealed in his correspondence. Above all, we crave a glimpse of the wives who helped their husbands on to fame but are themselves overshadowed by the greatness which they helped to create. Xanthippe, Jane Welsh Carlyle, Mrs. Ibsen, Mrs. Strindberg,—how the world would welcome from these women a candid truthful narrative of the real home life of their brilliant husbands. For twenty-three hundred years the world has been gossiping about the domestic life of Euripides and his wives; the story of their infidelity and of his fierce hatred of the whole race of women has been a juicy morsel for the lovers of unsavory gossip. For many generations the literary historians have been repeating scandalous tales regarding the infidelity of the two wives of Euripides, and his resultant hatred of women. Modern scholars are doing good work in bringing into the light the evidence on which these hoary old charges rest, in showing their absurdity and inherent improbability. What are the charges, and what is the evidence in support of them? The accounts which have come down to us run as follows: Euripides had two wives, the first of whom was named Melito, the second, Choirile (or Choirine); one of these wives (the name is not specified) engaged in an amour with a house-slave named Cephisophon. Suidas varies the details by stating that the first wife was Choirile, not Melito, and that after Euripides had put her away because of her loose conduct he married a second wife (name not given) who proved to be as abandoned in morals as her predecessor. To complete the sordid tale we must cite the assertion of Gellius that Euripides had two wives at the same time! Such are the charges. What is the correct interpretation of this contradictory gossip? Modern scholars solve the question of the relative order of Melito and Choirile in the marriage compact, and the double ménage of Euripides by insisting that there never was more than one wife and that her real name was Melito; the other name, Choirile, is so vulgar and coarse in its literal meaning that it could not possibly have been the real

name of a Greek woman; it is accordingly a nickname, applied to Melito in derision by the reckless comic poets; the occurrence of the two names, Melito and Choirile, in connection with the wife of Euripides led the grammarians to the natural but mistaken conclusion that Euripides had two wives; this frequent recurrence of the two names, often side by side, will also explain the assertion of Gellius that Euripides had two wives at the same time.

We may therefore eliminate one of the two alleged wives of Euripides. Was his first and only wife, Melito-Choirile, unfaithful? Not a pleasant subject, surely, and meriting discussion solely because the alleged hatred of Euripides for the entire female sex was caused by his harrowing matrimonial experiences. What, then, is the case for or against Melito? The legal evidence against her is absolutely nil; even the presumptive evidence is so flimsy that it would be thrown out of court. For note, first, this charge against Melito was never made during the lifetime of Euripides. In modern times such a charge might conceivably be withheld through a sense of propriety or fear of a suit for libel. No such considerations would have restrained Aristophanes, the bitter enemy of Euripides; the writers of Old Greek Comedy were held back neither by a sense of shame nor a fear of legal punishment. In the *Thesmophoriazusæ* of Aristophanes which was brought out in 411 B. C., when Euripides had reached the advanced age of seventy or more he was still living with his wife Melito. Every possible charge that a perverse ingenuity could heap upon his head is brought in this play; numerous general references to wifely infidelity occur, but not a hint do we find in the play of such conduct on the part of the wife of Euripides. Aristophanes was not the man to let such a chance slip had an opportunity presented itself. We may, therefore, pronounce a judicial verdict:—"charges not proven; frivolous and malicious."

What was the real cause of the supposed hatred of Euripides for women? Why is he considered the outstanding *Weiberfeind* of antiquity? Did he really hold women in contempt? The charge seems based upon the severe criticisms of

the sex which occur in his tragedies. One writer thinks that the accusation against him originated in the disgust and anger which the comic poets felt toward him because he was the first to exhibit wifely infidelity on the stage. Granted that he often, even too often, uttered savage censure of women; is this the whole story? By no means. It is indeed too much to say that over against every wicked female character in the plays of Euripides we can place a pure and noble woman,—maiden, wife or mother, but as a model of lovely maidenhood study his *Iphigeneia;* where too, can we find in the world's literature a nobler, more self-sacrificing wife than Alcestis? In one of the extant fragments he says that the most precious possession a man can have is a virtuous wife who shares her husband's joys and sorrows; in another fragment he praises the wife who comes to her husband's rescue when he is on the brink of financial ruin because of his foolish conduct; such a wife inspires him in his hour of weakness; she consoles him in his anguish.

Decharme [1] has made a critical study of this phase of Euripides' personality. He reaches the conclusion that the expression of favorable sentiments toward women is rare in Euripides; the cause of this aversion (if he really felt it) or this taciturnity (which he certainly manifests) is not to be looked for in the mythical story of his domestic infelicity, but rather in the native melancholy of the poet himself, in his solicitude and alarm over the rapid progress which the women's movement was making in his day. Strangely ironical it is that the two bitter foes, Aristophanes the conservative, Euripides the radical, should be united by the secret bond of a common fear arising from the swift pace of *das ewige Weib* of their day.

We are so accustomed to fantastic tales about the life and death of famous men in ancient times that we need not be surprised at anything which is told us regarding the end of a poet whose advanced views had aroused such bitter enmity.

[1] Euripides and the Spirit of his Drama. Paul Decharme. The Macmillan Co., New York.

We may accept the year 406 B. C. as the date of his death; the place, likewise, is well attested,—Macedonia, to which country he had retired at the invitation of the ruling prince Archelaus. When we seek the immediate cause of his death we come upon an ancient story, which though by no means impossible, taxes our credulity. The tale which the classical biographers tell us, runs to this effect: Euripides while at the court of Archelaus in Pella, took a walk out into the country; by chance a pack of hunting hounds belonging to Archelaus rushed by; mistaking Euripides for a wild animal they leaped upon him and tore him to pieces. This is the story in its most fanciful form. We find another version, which rationalizes some of the incredible features of the tale; by this rendering, two Macedonian poets whose envy he had excited by his popularity at court, bribed a slave of Archelaus to incite the dogs against Euripides. Modern critics reject the story in both its forms; they see in the legend simply a reflection of the resentment which the enemies of Euripides felt on account of his success; their malicious fancy took pleasure in devising an ignominious death for the man whom they so hated. This same fantastic but malevolent imagination is seen even more vividly in another ancient version,—that the poet was torn to pieces, not by dogs but by women; here we find in legendary form a concrete illustration of the ill-will which the Athenian women were supposed to entertain toward him because of his alleged disparagement of their sex. The shortest way of disposing of these absurd tales is to call attention to the fact that the clever but unscrupulous Aristophanes, ever on the hunt for material to disparage his arch-enemy, never hints at any sensational incidents in the death of his foe. Whatever the cause of his death his demise was received at Athens with every demonstration of sincere grief. His rival, the poet Sophocles, showed his personal sorrow by donning funereal black; the choruses and actors in the Dionysiac theater took the extreme step of appearing without their wreaths. The Athenians were unable to secure from Macedonia the body of their great poet, and they were accordingly obliged to content themselves with a

cenotaph outside the city on the road leading down to the Piræus. The reigning monarch of Macedonia erected for his distinguished guest a magnificent tomb. Nor did Dionysius, the tyrant of Sicily, fail to show regret at the loss of the poet who had once graced the court at Syracuse; he bought at a high price the lyre, the writing tablets, and the stylus which Euripides had formerly owned; these memorials he dedicated in the temple of the muses in Sicily.

He must be indeed a robust admirer of Euripides who can read unmoved the slashing attacks of Aristophanes. The great conservative, in play after play, pressed pitilessly his charges against the detested radical: "He is an infidel, he has repudiated the gods of his country, he has substituted fantastic new deities, he is, in a word, a dangerous and an immoral man."

The storm center in his day, he still arouses the love and excites the hate of men. To the Englishman, Swinburne, he is a "botcher"; to another Englishman, Milton, he is worthy of profoundest admiration; to the German, Schlegel, he is the fell destroyer of classical Greek poetry; another German,—Goethe, indignantly retorts that the poet who numbered Socrates among his friends, held the esteem of Aristotle, excited the admiration of Menander, and was mourned by Sophocles and the whole city of Athens "must have been somebody."

Without some knowledge of the spirit of the age of Euripides we cannot understand the uproar aroused by his plays. The Athens which came out of the Persian War bore some resemblance to the modern nations which survived the World War. We are today busily explaining many of the disturbing sociological and religious conditions in our country as the aftermath of the great War; conditions somewhat similar prevailed at Athens after the death grapple with Persia. A new generation appeared with revolutionary ideas born of contact with a mighty foreign nation in war. At Athens the awakened spirit showed itself in the new education, in an unwonted restlessness in the search after truth. A new generation of teachers appeared, men who aroused the anger and the fears of elderly believers in the gods of their fathers. The friends and teachers

of Euripides had already caused much wagging of conservative heads. His reputed teacher, Anaxagoras, had figured in a first-class heresy trial because of his assertion that the sun is not a god, but a mass of red hot metal; his friend, Protagoras, had proclaimed himself a frank agnostic and had insisted on the relativity of human judgment: "Man is the measure of all things. If a man says the day is hot, the day is hot to him; if another man says the day is cold, the day is cold to him." How then, are we to determine whether the day is hot or cold? "Every man is his own standard." Dangerous doctrine, this, as it seemed to the older generation of Athenians.

This distrust of Euripides as an unsettler of the ancient faith of his country explains his lack of success with his plays. We need not try to determine the exact number of first prizes which he gained; one critic says he won but four out of twenty-two competitions; most critics put it at five; some estimate it higher, but all agree that he was hopelessly outclassed by Aeschylus and Sophocles in a dramatic competition. We find the explanation of his relatively low literary standing in his own day in the fact that the conferring of prizes was in the hands of the older men, who were naturally in favor of traditional views and principles. It was the younger generation which worshiped Euripides and his advanced ideas; these young men had no effective means of making officially known their preference for the new poet; when they grew up and acquired a dominating position in Athenian life and literature, they manifested in no uncertain way their preferences. Thus began the spread of the fame of Euripides, a fame destined in later ages to outshine that of his colleagues and rivals, Aeschylus and Sophocles.

In our chapter on Seneca we show that Euripides served far more acceptably as a model for the Roman dramatists than did either Aeschylus or Sophocles; through Seneca he became the standard pattern for French classical tragedy. To this day the modern reader finds himself drawn to Euripides through the mysterious note of modernity which distinguishes him from Aeschylus and Sophocles. Mrs. Browning expressed it for all time in her oft-quoted lines:

"Our Euripides the Human
With his droppings of warm tears."

Aristotle said that "Euripides paints men as they are, while Sophocles paints them as they should be". Sophocles idealizes men, Euripides depicts them wrinkles and all; Sophocles is the portrait painter, Euripides is the photographer. Doubtless, the judgment of the æsthetic world will rate the literary portrait-painter above the photographer, but there will always be some who prize the faithful reproduction of the camera above the idealistic touches of the portrait-painter. Nor is there any reason why we should not cherish both Sophocles and Euripides; Sophocles, "who saw life steadily and saw it whole," Euripides, "with his droppings of warm tears"; there is indeed room for both in the human heart, but Idealism and Realism do not always keep house together in perfect amity.

Of the ninety or more plays which Euripides is thought to have written there have come down to us nineteen bearing his name. One of these, the *Rhesus*, is almost universally regarded as the work of another ancient author. It is known that Euripides really wrote a play called *Rhesus;* it seems clear that another dramatist chose the same subject. (Such duplication of titles was by no means rare. Both Sophocles and Euripides wrote a play entitled *Electra.*) When the real *Rhesus* by our author had disappeared men mistook the *Rhesus* of the unknown poet for the similarly-named tragedy of Euripides. Another of the extant plays of Euripides, the *Cyclops*, is the only surviving specimen of a satyr-play.

Deducting the *Rhesus* and the *Cyclops* we have seventeen tragedies as compared with seven of Aeschylus and seven of Sophocles. It is fortunate for the world that we have seventeen tragedies of Euripides, and yet possibly it is unfortunate for him because the seven plays of Aeschylus and of Sophocles are masterpieces while among the seventeen of Euripides are some which fall below the standard of his *Medea*, his *Iphigenia in Tauris*, thus sensibly reducing his general average.

The leading English translations of Euripides are those

of Way and Gilbert Murray. Mr. Way has translated into English verse all the plays of Euripides, in three volumes, 1894-1898; Professor Gilbert Murray has translated eight plays including *Rhesus* (*Hippolytus*, *Bacchæ*, *Trojan Women*, *Electra*, *Medea*, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, *Rhesus*, *Alcestis*.)

The English reader will of course wish to consult Robert Browning's *Balaustion's Adventure* which contains a transcription of the *Alcestis*.

The charges brought against Euripides as an artist and as a man taxed the vocabulary of his foes. A few of the specifications of the artistic indictment must suffice: His plays fall short of the nobility of those of Sophocles; they are trickily rhetorical; they are stuffed with sophistical arguments on ethical topics; they lack logical coherence; his choruses are but loosely connected with the plot; he created a debased form of melody in his songs; his prologues are faulty, introducing long genealogies and giving to the audience information which is partly unnecessary, partly an inartistic anticipation of the incidents which are to be brought out in the play; he makes an improper use of divine intervention (the *Deus ex Machina*). We have already referred to the attacks on his personal character; he is all that is bad; he is an elemental villain, a disgrace to his country. If his enemies omitted any opprobrious epithet it was simply an oversight. Had O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock* been available they would have joyously employed as a superb climax the words of Captain Jack Boyle's crushing indictment of Joxer Daly as a "prognosticator an' a procrastinator." We need spend no time on the charges against his character; there is not a shred of evidence to support them. Nor have we space to discuss all or even many of the literary shortcomings attributed to him. Of the long list two in particular have been so persistently reiterated in modern times as well as in his own day, that they demand attention; his use of the prologue and his introduction of a god to assist in the development and solution of his plots.

The technical term applied to the intervention of a god in the development or solution of a plot is *Deus ex Machina*, (the

god from the machine); this is the Latin translation of an exactly equivalent Greek term. The Machine, or *Machina* employed in the Greek theater, was a crane or derrick by means of which bodies or other objects could be raised or lowered; it was placed at the left of the stage, high up above the back scene. The chief purpose of this machine was to provide for the appearance or disappearance of a god or hero in a superhuman manner. No details have come down to us regarding the actual construction of this derrick nor of the method by which the gods or heroes were made to disappear above the back scene. We are not here concerned with the mechanical details of the device; our chief interest is in the use to which Euripides put it in the development and solution of his plots.

The *Deus ex Machina* may be used properly or improperly. What is the proper use? What is the improper use? Aristotle gives us some explicit information in his *Poetics*. He says that the intervention of a god in drama is allowable under two conditions only; first, to inform the audience about events which preceded the opening of the play; second, to foretell events which will occur after the close of the play. A god may be permitted to disclose the past because a knowledge of ancient or prehistoric events is possible only to the eternal deities; the prediction of events which are to follow the close of a play is peculiarly the function of a god, since only a superhuman being can foresee the future.

In addition to the two uses to which Aristotle limits the *Deus ex Machina* the following are considered by critics to be allowable; to bring strife to an end; to reconcile opposing forces; to explain the religious significance of the myth or legend which forms the basis of the plot. The use of the *Machina* is not limited exclusively to the end of a play; it may be used at any time to introduce a supernatural being, at the end, in the middle, or even at the very beginning of a play.

What is the improper use of the *Deus ex Machina?* In general it is the arbitrary intervention of a god to solve a difficulty which the poet has himself created by his treatment of the plot. Aristotle in his *Poetics* insists that the solution of a dramatic

situation should be natural, in accordance with reason, and not dependent upon supernatural means or a mechanical device. As a concrete illustration of the improper use of the *Deus ex Machina* he cites the *Medea* of Euripides where Medea and her children are carried off in safety on an aerial chariot drawn by dragons sent by the god Helios; this divine intervention was the only means available to the author to secure the escape of Medea with the bodies of her murdered children.

We see, therefore, that Euripides did, occasionally, at least, make use of the *Deus ex Machina* in the way which Aristotle condemns. That he was not the only dramatist who improperly used the device is clear from a remark of Plato in the *Cratylus*: "Whenever the tragic writers are in difficulty, they have recourse to the *Machina*, by introducing the gods." As early as the fifth century B. C. the expression *Deus ex Machina* became the customary term for the unexpected deliverance of a tragic hero or heroine in danger.

The vague charge against Euripides that he employed the prologue and the *Deus ex Machina* is meaningless and unjust. All the three great dramatists whose plays have come down to us made use of both the prologue and the *Deus ex Machina*. Aeschylus employed the *Deus ex Machina* in the *Prometheus*. When the hero is fastened to the cliff the daughters of Oceanus come swooping down like winged birds; at first they talk to him from aloft; then at his request they alight in the orchestra. Their passage through the air implies the use of a *Machina*. Sophocles must have employed this device in the *Andromeda* when Perseus flies back from the land of the Gorgons. It was not the mere act of employing these methods which subjected Euripides to the censure of ancient critics, but rather the improper use to which he was accused of putting them.

Careful students of Euripides emphasize the fact that in his use of the *Deus ex Machina* he is by no means to be regarded as a clumsy dramatist forced to have recourse to a mechanical method of solving a tangled plot. Gilbert Murray and Paul Decharme are agreed that we can find in Euripides scarcely a case in which the intervention of a god was employed

to untie or cut a knot which the dramatist had too clumsily tied. That Euripides freely employed the *Deus ex Machina* is beyond question; Decharme detects its use in eight of his extant tragedies; Pauly goes so far as to assert that it us used in twelve of the eighteen extant plays; Gilbert Murray detects it in "about half." This discussion will, we hope, make it clear that although Euripides does indeed make frequent use of the *Deus ex Machina,* it is unfair to charge him with using it solely to rescue his characters from a desperate or humanly inextricable situation.

The expression *Deus ex Machina* has come down to modern drama, but it is there used as a term of mild censure for a play which ends in an illogical or unreasonable way. Webster defines it as follows: "Any person or thing artificially or extraneously introduced, as in a story, to solve abruptly a difficulty insolvable by ordinary means." It will be at once noticed that this modern definition corresponds closely with the improper use of the device which Aristotle specifically censures. Dramatists still rely upon a sudden intervention of somebody or something to get them out of a dramatic difficulty. The rich and generous uncle whose existence was absolutely unknown is still arriving at the critical moment, thereby making possible the immediate marriage of the devoted but impecunious lovers.

We have said that Euripides was not censured for using but rather for abusing the prologue. The reader should clearly understand that the prologue of a Greek play was very different from that of a modern drama. The prologues of plays in the period from Dryden to Sheridan are entirely separate and distinct from the plays themselves, and they may be omitted without detriment to the stage performance. Indeed, some of these prologues are by a hand other than that of the author of the play; the prologue of Addison's *Cato* was written by Mr. Pope; that of Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* by David Garrick.

The prologue of a Greek Tragedy is an integral part of the play and it was always written by the author himself. All normal Greek plays begin with a prologue of some kind. Euripides

was criticized for crowding into his prologue information too detailed, and for the insertion of lengthy genealogies. In the *Frogs* Aristophanes represents Euripides as boasting that his characters tell all about their family histories: "Better that, than to have told about your own family history," is the grim retort of Dionysus. Euripides used his prologues for what is technically known as exposition. Every dramatist, ancient or modern, must devise a method of conveying to the audience information sufficient to make clear the initial situation. He may mass this information in the early part of the play; he may scatter it through the drama, revealing as much as is needed at each particular movement. A play without exposition of any kind would prove puzzling to an audience. The critics of Euripides insisted that he told too much not only of the past but of what was to happen in the course of the play. His details about the past were unnecessary, critics said, because the number of possible plots in Greek tragedy was so limited that the cultivated audience was thoroughly familiar with every ancient legend which could possibly be treated dramatically. In their enthusiastic eulogies of the supreme intelligence of Greek audiences modern critics are likely to forget the matter-of-fact observation of the calmly critical Aristotle: "The known is known to few." In five Greek words he punctures the complacent assumption that all Greek myths were known to all Greeks. Quite possibly Euripides knew his audiences better than his critics have suspected.

Euripides was charged with telling too much in advance about the plot. It is difficult to pronounce judgment in this matter; every dramatist must decide for himself how much preliminary information he should impart. Occasionally we find on theater programs a printed synopsis of the entire plot; such an abstract is welcomed by a certain portion of the audience, scorned and shunned by another section. The golden "mean" of Aristotle, the "nothing in excess" of the Greek proverb applies to drama as to life. "Foreshadowing without foretelling" is the safe and sane principle as formulated in the standard modern critical treatises.

Chapter XII

GREEK COMEDY

In his *Sesame and Lilies* John Ruskin gives a bit of sage advice which will prove of inestimable advantage to those who follow it: "You must get into the habit of looking intensely at words, and assuring yourself of their meaning, syllable by syllable—nay, letter by letter." Properly handled, an unabridged dictionary is a fascinating book. We might apply Mr. Ruskin's suggestion to the English word "comedy," by examining it "syllable by syllable—nay, letter by letter." What is the origin of the compound? It comes from two Greek words; on the spelling and the meaning of one of these scholars have agreed, but there is a sharp divergence of opinion concerning the Greek noun which forms the basis of the other half of the compound. The terminal letters—*edy*, better seen in the Latin equivalent *comoedia*, are a corruption of the Greek word *ode* meaning "a song." Comedy is therefore "a song." What kind of a song? The difficulty lies in the letters *com*. There are two Greek words containing the letters *com:* comedy is either "the village song" or "the song of the revelers." All depends upon our choice of the original Greek word. Aristotle is squarely committed to the "village" theory; in his *Poetics* he says: "Comedians were so called not from joining in the procession of revelers, but on account of wandering through the villages because they were held in no repute in the city." This is equivalent to saying that comedy had its origin among the rustic villagers because in its beginnings it was considered too coarse for the refined ears of city dwellers.

The other meaning, "song of the revelers," is quite distinct in its origin; by this second explanation comedy is a "comus song." Comus means in Greek "a revel." Young city-bred men,

after a night of drinking wandered noisily through the streets of Athens singing their Bacchanalian songs and rousing from their slumbers the drowsy burghers. *Comus* became at a later period a Roman god of Mirth and Jollity and was represented as a winged youth with a wine-flushed face. The English student will at once recall Milton's *Comus* where he is depicted as a son of Circe and Bacchus. The two possible meanings of comedy are, therefore, "village song" and "song of the revelers." Modern critical opinion is decidedly in favor of the second suggested meaning,—"song of the revelers." Thus, Webster defines the word comedy as coming from *komos*,—"a jovial festivity with music and dancing, a festal procession, an ode sung at this procession, for comedy was originally of a lyric character." He adds, however, that perhaps the word *komos* is "akin to *kome*, village." The late Professor Mahaffy accepts, with some hesitation, the "village song" explanation.

Laughter and tears lie so near together in the human soul that tragedy and comedy doubtless originated with primeval man. The infant in the cradle smiles and cries; the first man wept and laughed by turns. When, therefore, authorities tell us that Greek comedy was of later origin than Greek tragedy the statement must be interpreted as applying solely to the official recognition of comedy by the state. Aristotle in Chapter V of his *Poetics* tells us that "The changes through which tragedy passed and the persons through whom the changes were brought about are known, but the beginnings of comedy are obscure because at first it was not taken seriously; not until a late period did it receive official recognition by the assignment of a comic chorus by the Archon; at first the members of the chorus were volunteers."

The ultimate origin of Greek comedy according to Aristotle is to be found in the phallic processional songs of the primitive Greeks. These phallic processions were in honor of Dionysus who was a nature god, a god of the crops as well as the god of the wine cup. At the head of the procession was carried a phallus,—a symbol of the fertility of nature. As the procession of the god moved on, the bystanders laughed and

uttered jokes more or less ribald and unseemly. Herodotus, the Greek historian, tells us that the Egyptians, also, celebrated phallic feasts which combined nature worship with satirical and comic jibes aimed at definite individuals.

Greek traditions lead us to believe that in early times when a rustic deemed himself wronged by a city man, he came into town by night, took his place before the house of the person who had wronged him, and sang insulting songs designed to excite the prejudice of the citizens against the alleged wrongdoer. We are told further that this rustic disguised his identity by staining his face with wine lees; here we have the germ of the masks which later played so prominent a part in a comic or tragic performance. We see, therefore, that from the very beginning of comedy personal lampooning formed an integral part. We shall observe the full development of the tendency when we come to a consideration of what is technically known as "Old Comedy."

We have thus far traced the primitive origin of comedy in the phallic songs, and the first manifestations of the lampooning element in the song of the rustic before the door of the man who had injured him. We are in this chapter chiefly concerned with Attic comedy since all our extant comedies are the work of Athenian writers; for the sake of completeness, however, we must refer briefly to Doric comedy because from a Dorian city came the man, Susarion, who was destined to shine as one of the founders of Attic comedy.

The Dorians claimed the credit of originating both comedy and tragedy. In support of their claim they appealed to etymology; they pointed to the fact that the word *kome*, "village," from which they derived "comedy" is a Dorian, not an Athenian word. We have the names of several Dorian comic writers, but as none of their plays have survived we need not burden the memory of the reader with a tedious list of authors and titles.

With Attic comedy we are on firmer ground; we have not only names and dates but a multiplicity of details which help us to understand the extant comedies of Aristophanes and the fragments of Menander. It is true that the beginnings

of Attic comedy are as obscure as those of Dorian comedy,—Aristotle himself admits this, but we can trace its development through various periods until its decline, and we have plays or extensive fragments which illustrate all the stages. Attic comedy is so intimately connected with the freedom of satirizing persons and institutions that we cannot imagine it as existing under any government except an unlimited democracy; as the Athenian democracy grew stronger comedy became bolder; when that government collapsed and despotism took its place, comedy grew timid, dropped its personal banter and exercised its wit on types,—braggart soldiers, parasites, gilded youth, and angry fathers. So far as we can assign a specific date to the origin of Attic comedy it was contemporary with the beginnings of the Athenian democracy,—early in the fifth century B. C., just prior to the Persian Wars.

We shall not cumber our account of Attic drama with a barren array of names and dates, but we cannot omit a reference to Susarion, a Dorian from Megara on the Isthmus of Corinth, who, somewhere about 560 B. C. wandered over the boundary into Attica and introduced order into the rustic Attic festivals in honor of Dionysus. Under Susarion these festivities became farces filled with insulting lampoons aimed at particular individuals. Here we have a distinct trace of the personal element which later became so characteristic of the division of Attic drama known as Old Comedy. But this boldness of personal reference in the farces of Susarion had to face and overcome many difficulties before it could become sufficiently established to secure official recognition. Before the Athenian democracy reached its bloom under Pericles, the personal and aristocratic government of the tyrants known as the Pisistratidæ intervened. Liberal as these "tyrants" were in literary matters (it was under the Pisistratidæ that the scattered poems of "Homer" were brought together and edited) they were in no mood to tolerate personal attacks by the poets. They knew well that as soon as the people began to laugh at them, their dignity and authority would be fatally undermined. When the Pisistratidæ were overthrown and the praises of the tyrannicides, Har-

modius and Aristogiton, were resounding at every festal banquet, the Athenian democracy emerged with a rush and with it the long-stifled jeers of the saucy Athenian comedians.

It is convenient to follow the traditional division of Attic comedy into three groups,—Old Comedy, Middle Comedy, New Comedy. We may characterize these groups as follows:

Old Comedy was intensely personal in its references and its attacks.

New Comedy was impersonal. It satirized types rather than individuals.

Middle Comedy (390-320) was a transition period between Old and New Comedy.

Passing to a more detailed discussion of the three groups we may call Old Attic comedy the Political Period. The three leading writers of this division are Cratinus, Eupolis, and Aristophanes. Latinists may be better able to remember the three names if we give them as arranged by the poet Horace in the form of a dactylic hexameter:

Eupolis atque Cratinus Aristophanesque poetae.

Old Attic comedy was characterized by its criticism of political affairs and its audacious attacks on officials and prominent citizens. In the chapter on Aristophanes we speak of the savage treatment which the demagogues, the politicians, and even the philosopher Socrates received from that brilliant but unscrupulous conservative.

A notable peculiarity of Old Comedy is the so-called *Parabasis*, a feature which appears in no other form of literature, ancient or modern. The word means literally "an advance near"; "a coming forward"; it was so called because at a certain point in an Old Comedy the actors left the scene for a time, and the members of the chorus who had been standing with their backs to the audience while facing the actors, laid aside a portion of their costume, turned around and "advanced near" to the audience. They sang, and delivered with energetic dance-movements, an address to the audience. In the lines of the *Par-*

abasis the poet gave expression to his personal views on topics connected with the literary or scientific or political events of the day. The subjects which he discussed were not necessarily connected in any way with the theme of the play itself. In the *Clouds* of Aristophanes the chorus upbraids the audience for refusing to award the prize to the earlier edition of that comedy; in other plays pungent advice on the political issues of the day is brought home to the audience.

A complete *Parabasis* consists of seven parts. First, a brief farewell to the departing actors. Second, the *Parabasis* proper, an address on a special political or literary topic. This speech usually ended with what was called the "choker," that is, a few lines which were dashed off by the coryphaeus at breakneck speed without stopping to take breath; the effort of accomplishing this without a pause was a severe strain on the speaker. At the close of the "choker" the chorus of twenty-four divided into two groups of twelve each; one semi-chorus sang an ode, often of a distinctly religious nature and frequently of exquisite literary beauty; this ode was followed by a jocular address in trochaic verse, called an *epirrhema*. The second half of the chorus then sang an ode corresponding in metrical structure to the ode sung by the first twelve of the chorus. This second ode was followed by a jovial group of trochaic lines known as an *antepirrhema*. Although the *Parabasis* is a regular feature of Old Comedy it is entirely lacking in three of the comedies of Aristophanes; it is incomplete in three others and is found in its complete form in but five of the eleven extant comedies of that poet—the *Acharnians*, the *Knights*, the *Clouds*, the *Wasps*, and the *Birds*. In some plays the missing *Parabasis* was supplied by one of the actors who stepped out of his rôle, and, assuming the person of the poet, spoke as his mouthpiece.

We have spoken of Middle Comedy (390-320 B. C.) as a transitional stage of Attic drama intermediate between the Old and the New Comedy. The extreme types of this comedy,—Old and New, are clearly differentiated, but it is difficult to draw exact dividing line between the three branches.

As Professor Mahaffy phrases it:[1] "In every leading feature ascribed to the Middle Comedy, we have parallels in the older masters." At the other extreme, also, we find it difficult to draw the line between the Middle and the New.

In the absence of a single complete play of Middle Comedy we are forced to conjecture its distinguishing characteristics. Among these supposed features are: parodies of old mythology, character sketches rather than personal and political satire, caricatures of contemporary manners, a gradual disuse of the chorus, criticisms of schools of philosophy such as the Platonists and the Pythagoreans. The great number of plays written by the poets of the Middle Comedy may be inferred from the fact that Athenaeus claimed to have read more than eight hundred comedies of this class. We know the names of over fifty poets of Middle Comedy, but it is unnecessary for us to catalogue the names or to discuss any of the writers except Antiphanes and Alexis.

A comparison of the later plays of the Old Comedy period with those of the Middle Comedy makes us keenly conscious of the shadowy border-line between the two species. Antiphanes is considered the leading writer of Middle Comedy. He was born at Athens, according to one ancient authority, although Rhodes, Smyrna and Carystus are also mentioned as his birthplace. We may put his birth-year at about 408 B. C. Beginning his playwriting at the age of twenty he lived long enough to produce the prodigious number of two hundred and sixty comedies. (Some scholars estimate the number at more than three hundred). We have about two hundred and thirty titles, and some nine hundred lines of fragments of his plays. His themes were manifold, including mythology, historical characters, trades and professions. The extant fragments do not support his ancient reputation for clearness and elegance, but the discrepancy is doubtless due to corruptions in the text of the quotations. We may judge of his popularity by the reported action of the Athenians in decreeing at his death that his body

[1] History of Greek Literature, Mahaffy, Harper & Brothers, New York.

should be transferred from Chios to Athens and interred there with public honors.

Alexis, like his somewhat older fellow-poet Antiphanes, was extraordinarily prolific as a comic writer. Suidas assures us that Alexis wrote two hundred and forty-five comedies; of these only about one thousand lines, preserved in Athenaeus and Stobaeus, have come down to us. Born in Thurium, Italy, about 390 B. C., he is said to have lived to the extreme age of one hundred and six. This almost incredible statement might be at once dismissed as a legend were it not that in one of the extant fragments he mentions the marriage of Ptolemy Philadelphus in 288 B. C.; this notice, if genuine, attests that he was then one hundred and two years old, provided 390 B. C. was the year of his birth. We are told that he removed to Athens and was made a citizen of that city. In view of the almost complete loss of his works we are chiefly interested in the fact that he was the uncle and instructor of Menander, the famous poet of New Comedy. He is credited with the invention of the parasite as a comic character; this claim is disputed by scholars who point to his appearance in comedies older than those of Alexis; but whether or not Alexis was the inventor of this character it seems quite certain that he employed parasites more frequently and more successfully than any of his forerunners.

New Comedy (320-250 B. C.) really began with the catastrophic defeat of the Athenians by Philip of Macedon in the Battle of Chaeronea, 338 B. C.,

"That dishonest victory
At Chaeronea, fatal to liberty"

as Milton phrases it. It ended about 250 B. C., a time when original literary creation had largely ceased and scientific compilers and critical commentators took the place of the inventive artists of former times. New Comedy was essentially a comedy of manners, of every-day domestic life. Types replaced individuals as objects of satire: braggart soldiers, scapegrace or model sons, fathers,—hard or indulgent, injured maidens, courtesans, parasites, cunning slaves. Although these are

the types which are found most frequently in the Greek fragments and in the plays of Plautus and Terence, modeled after New Comedy originals, Mahaffy, after a careful study of the many extant fragments, felt justified in claiming that all the characteristic features of Old Comedy had passed through Middle Comedy down to New Comedy. Thus, of the topics handled by the writers of New Comedy,—parodies of mythology, ridicule of tragic poets, political attacks on living persons, satire of philosophers, he finds previous examples in Old or Middle Comedy. The first of these themes,—parodies of mythology are found in Middle Comedy; the remaining subjects form the stock in trade of Aristophanes, the chief of Old Comedy writers.

The leading writers of New Comedy are Philemon, Diphilus and Menander. We know of over sixty writers of this school, but with the exception of some long fragments of Menander's comedies nothing but a volume of scanty citations is left of the great output of these wags of the New School. We owe these fragments chiefly to the labors of Stobaeus who had an eye for moral apothegms, and Athenaeus whose keen nose was always on the scent for references to cooks and cooking. Valuable as these quotations are to students of philosophy and gastronomy they give us a provokingly inadequate impression of the comic genius of the writers. Philemon, Diphilus, Menander, constitute the famous triumvirate of New Comedy. We must limit our discussion of Philemon and Diphilus that we may secure space for fuller treatment of Menander.

Philemon (not the New Testament writer and friend of St. Paul) almost reached the century mark,—ninety-eight years, if we accept the recorded dates of his birth and death, 361–263 B. C. We are by no means certain of his birthplace,—countries as far apart as Soli in Asia Minor and Syracuse in Sicily are mentioned, but we know that he lived for a considerable time in Athens, interrupting his residence there by a sojourn at the court of Ptolemy Philadelphus in Alexandria, Egypt.

Philemon and Menander were rivals not only in literary

matters but in the affairs of the heart. Philemon begrudged Menander the favor of the lady Glycera,—a name which suggests by its literal meaning (sweet) that it is a pseudonym of the same sort as Horace's *Pyrrha* (the girl with the fiery hair) and his *Lalage*, the "Sweetly laughing, sweetly prattling Lalage":

> dulce ridentem Lalagen amabo,
> dulce loquentem.

Apparently Menander won the love duel and retained the favor of his Glycera; but in the literary struggle the honors were decidedly with Philemon. Again and again, Menander had the mortification of seeing the prize awarded to his rival. "Don't you feel ashamed whenever you gain a victory over me?" was his frequent greeting to Philemon. The verdict of time has reversed the judgment of his contemporaries, and conferred the ultimate prize on Menander. The accounts of his death are so many and so incongruous that we mention them simply as a striking indication of the difficulties which confront the archaeologist in search of exact facts: "he died of a violent outburst of laughter"; "he died of excess of joy at a dramatic victory"; "he met a peaceful end while engaged in composing his last work." Read Apuleius, Lucian, and Plutarch, and take your choice of the three accounts. We are told that he composed ninety-seven comedies; of these we have titles or fragments of no less than fifty-seven, a good showing, all things considered. Two of the extant comedies of Plautus are based upon comedies of Philemon: the *Mercator* upon Philemon's *Merchant*, the *Trinummus* upon his *Treasure*.

We are unable to ascertain the exact dates either of the birth or the death of Diphilus; we must content ourselves with the general statement that he was a contemporary of Menander (342-291 B. C.). We are told that his birthplace was Sinope in Asia Minor, and that he died in Smyrna. His plays, however, were mostly written and acted at Athens, so that we are justified in ranking him under the Attic poets although he was not born in Attica and he did not die there; as a fact,

he led a wandering life as we might infer from the mention of places so far apart as Sinope, Athens, Smyrna. The tradition that he sometimes acted in his own comedies reminds us of the early days of Greek tragedy at Athens when authors were expected to appear in their own plays.

Critics find some difficulty in attaching the proper catalogue label to Diphilus because of his subjects. Chronologically he belongs under New Comedy; on the other hand, his fondness for mythological topics and his choice of themes from common life point to Middle Comedy. To the general reader, in the absence of any complete comedy of this author, the exact classification is of little importance. Since he is universally grouped with Philemon and Menander as the chief representatives of New Comedy, we need not in this general sketch attempt to disturb the long recognized classification. Of much greater importance is the well attested fact that both Plautus and Terence quarried in the comedies of Diphilus for dramatic material. At least five of the plays of Plautus,—*Casina*, *Rudens*, *Asinaria*, *Vidularia* and *Commorientes* are taken from plays of Diphilus, the exact titles of which are known. Terence, also, in his *Adelphi* uses a scene from the same play of Diphilus which Plautus had utilized in his *Commorientes*. Diphilus, like his two contemporaries, was a prolific author. He wrote about one hundred comedies of which we have the titles of fifty. Of his style we are told that it was simple, natural, with special attention to versification. We note with interest, that although he was not a native Athenian his diction was pure enough to satisfy the critical Attic ear. For a man coming from a remote part of the Greek-speaking world to satisfy the Attic purists it was as creditable a triumph as it is today when a Frenchman from the provinces appears on a Parisian stage without arousing sarcastic jeers at his non-Parisian accent. Although we know even less about Diphilus than we do about his two poetic colleagues, we are justified from the estimates of his contemporaries and the fragments which Kock and Meineke have preserved in ranking him among the talented poets of his period.

Finally we reach the Star of New Comedy, the Menander whose lost works the world mourns equally with those of the great Lesbian poetess, Sappho. As late as the sixteenth century his plays had survived; then follows a sudden and almost complete disappearance except a few cherished lines. At the end of the nineteenth century the scholarly world was startled by the news that searchers among the ruins of Egypt had unearthed considerable portions of the lost plays of Menander. In quick succession, for about a decade, additional discoveries were made until to the sixteen hundred and fifty lines previously perserved by Kock and Meineke some fourteen hundred lines had been added, giving us the by no means inconsiderable number of three thousand lines, approximately equivalent to five books of the *Iliad*, or about two full-length Greek tragedies of fifteen hundred lines each .

We may fix the birth year of Menander as 342 B. C. and his death at 291 B. C. a period of fifty-one years. Unlike his rival poets he was a native-born Athenian; born in Athens, he died there, or rather in the Piraeus, the seaport of that city. His parents were in comfortable circumstances; his father, Diopeithes, was, it is thought, the well-known general who was in charge of the Chersonese in Thrace and is mentioned by Demosthenes in his oration *De Chersoneso.*

When Menander was twenty years old, Aristotle the philosopher died, and his school passed into the care of his chief disciple, Theophrastus. Menander was an intimate friend of this Theophrastus; there is nothing improbable in the tradition that he became a pupil of the distinguished successor of Aristotle. The high social status of Menander is attested by the invitation which he received from Ptolemy Soter of Alexandria to visit his court as a guest. Invitations from distinguished foreign potentates to Athenian literary men were by no means rare; Plato had traveled to Sicily as the guest of both Dionysus and Dion; Euripides had gone to Macedon on the invitation of Archelaus, and he died there. Menander declined with thanks the invitation of Ptolemy Soter, but we have seen

that Philemon received and accepted a similar invitation from another Ptolemy,—Philadelphus.

Favored by his Athenian birth, his high social position and the literary atmosphere in which he lived, Menander easily turned to literature and he began to write plays at an early age. We shall trace his literary activity in a subsequent paragraph, but in passing we may refer to his death while bathing in the Piraeus, the harbor of Athens, a fate that reminds us of the untimely death of another, though more youthful poet,—Shelley. Menander's countrymen erected in his memory a tomb along the road which runs from the Piraeus to Athens. Five hundred years later the writer Pausanias saw this tomb and mentions it in his description of the antiquities of Athens.

In the Vatican there may still be seen a statue which is generally regarded as that of Menander, and is by some scholars thought to be the identical statue of the poet which was seen by Pausanias in the theater at Athens.

The literary fame of Menander, like that of Euripides, was largely posthumous. Euripides is said to have won only five first prizes during his entire literary career; Menander was but a little more fortunate,—eight prizes is his record. Philemon, his rival in love and in letters, seems to have appealed more successfully to the ear of the critical Athenians.

After his death his fame spread far and wide,—another reminder of Euripides. We know that his comedies were in existence as late as the tenth and eleventh centuries (Suidas and Eustathius are our authorities for this statement); still later, in the sixteenth century, twenty-three of his comedians, with a commentary by a writer named Psellus, were in existence in Constantinople. A legend persists that even now in the cript of the Mosque at Constantinople are dust-covered heaps of priceless manuscripts. Many a scholar had anticipated during the World War the expulsion of the Turks from Constantinople, and had hoped that the western world might gain access to this cellar; it seemed possible that a second Renaissance awaited the world. But the Turk still holds the sanctuary which he won in 1453, and the manuscripts, if there, must await the great day.

Menander was an admirer and imitator of Euripides; the student of comparative literature is struck by the remarkable resemblances between the two men. Both were keen observers of daily life, both were profound students of the human mind, and, above all, both loved to express their thoughts in brief epigrammatic form. It was this marked tendency of Euripides which, making it easy to cite his single lines or couplets, has bequeathed to us many quotations from his lost plays, while the longer sentences of Aeschylus and Sophocles have proved less tempting to later compilers of anthologies. The pithy sentences of Menander became so proverbial that they were brought together in a book for use in schools. Some of his proverbs are even today household words. "The property of friends is common" is a case in point. "Whom the gods love die young" is another. But remarkable in a high degree is the fact that St. Paul had not only read Menander but actually quotes him in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, 15: 33: "Evil communications corrupt good manners,"—a sentence taken from the *Thais* of Menander. This quotation from Menander is not the only indication that St. Paul was well read in classical Greek. In his speech before the Areopagus in Athens he quotes: (Acts 17: 28) "In him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring"; by a remarkable bit of good fortune we still have the poem from which St. Paul quotes; the poet was Aratus; he came from Soli, the reputed birthplace of Philemon, a town not far from St. Paul's own native Tarsus.

Both Plautus and Terence drew heavily on Menander. Caesar called Terence a "Demi-Menander,"—*Dimidiatus Menander*. Plautus, however, seems to have taken more from Philemon than from Menander. Two at least of the plays of Plautus,—the *Bacchides* and the *Stichus*, seem based on known plays by Meander; in the case of several other plays of Plautus it is probable that he derived material from that author. The debt of Terence to Meander is large and unmistakable; he used him much more than he utilized other authors; of the six extant plays of Terence, we can trace the influence of

Menander in four,—the *Eunuchus*, *Andria*, *Heautontimoroumenos*, *Adelphi*.

In connection with the borrowings of Plautus and Terence we frequently come across the word *contaminatio* applied by ancient commentators to a certain type of literary appropriation. It is difficult to translate this word into English; "contamination" would be wide of the meaning. It really refers to the common Roman habit of combining the plot of two Greek comedies into a single play. This custom arose from a feeling on the part of the Roman poets that the action in any single Greek comedy was not sufficiently robust to please an inattentive Roman audience; hence the necessity of intensifying the plot by combining two Greek plays. Terence's *Andria* and his *Eunuchus* are each combinations of two of Menander's plots; Terence's *Adelphi* was a blending of incidents from a play by Menander, and one by Diphilus. His *Hecyra* is taken, it is thought, not from Menander, but from another writer, Apollodorus of Carystus.

In view of the overwhelming literary fame of Menander from the time of his death until the recent recovery of extensive fragments, it is somewhat disconcerting to have Mr. John H. Fruse, writer of the article on Menander in the fourteenth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, speak somewhat disparagingly of Menander in the light of the new discoveries: "It is doubtful whether these fragments, which are of sufficient length to afford a basis for the consideration of the merit of Menander as a writer of comedies, justify the reputation enjoyed by him in ancient times. With the exception of a scene in the *Epitrepontes*, which would appeal to the litigious Athenians, they contain little that is witty or humorous; there is little variety in the characters, the situations are conventional, and the plots, not of a highly edifying character, are lacking in originality. Menander's chief excellences seem to be facility of language, accurate portrayal of manners, and naturalness of the sentiments which he puts into the mouth of his *Dramatis Personae*."

Chapter XIII

ARISTOPHANES

In a conversation with that urbane representative of Boston's bluest blood, the late Colonel Higginson, the talk drifted upon Aristophanes, the Athenian Greek poet. Colonel Higginson made a remark so simple and yet so profoundly true that it deserves quotation at the head of this chapter: "The eleven comedies of Aristophanes combined have not done as much harm in the world as one tainted French novel." Precisely so. Scholars who discuss Aristophanes critically are obliged to make pointed reference to his handling of subjects which are taboo in refined society. Mr. Symonds, in his ecstatic admiration of this great wit, leans backward in asserting that Aristophanes is never vulgar. Vulgar? That depends upon what we mean by vulgarity. Had Mr. Symonds said that Aristophones is never immoral, few would cavil at the assertion. Vulgar? Yes, decidedly vulgar, if gleeful rolling in the muck is vulgar. Immoral? Emphatically no! Among the apocryphal stories told of General Grant is one to the effect that on a certain occasion when he was with a group of men, one of them, giving a side glance around the room, said: "Here's a good one; I believe there are no ladies present." "No," said General Grant, "but there are gentlemen present." Aristophanes would have plunged into the "good one" with no preliminary side glance and no reference to the ladies; and the joke of it is that this merry wag who would have felt far more at home in Restoration London than in twentieth century Boston actually prided himself upon his moral superiority to the vulgar fellows who were writing comedies unfit for polite ears. If certain of the comedies of Aristophanes are superior in refinement to those of the "vulgar" fellows whom he criticizes for their

coarseness, we shudder at the thought of what the lost comedies of his rivals must have been. We are reminded of the countryman who suddenly came upon the famous Greek statue of Victory which has come down to us in a badly battered condition. Gazing in awe at the mutilated torso he remarked: "Well, if that is Victory, I would like to see the other fellow."

Now that we have performed our critical duty in reference to Aristophanes' nastiness, we may wash our hands and proceed to our regular work of discussing Aristophanes the man and the writer.

Where shall we go for our authentic facts? The chief original biographical material must be sought in two ancient Greek "lives," and in a notice by the Greek lexicographer, Suidas; from his plays also we may glean some first-hand facts which will help us to form an impression of his personality.

Neither the year of his birth nor that of his death can be exactly ascertained. Estimates of his birth-year range from 455 B. C. to 446 B. C., with a preponderance of critical acceptance of the year 448 B. C.; for our purposes it will be near enough if we say that he was born in the middle of the fifth century. The same uncertainty prevails regarding the year of his death. We know that in 388 B. C. he wrote his *Plutus*, the last play of his which has come down to us. How soon thereafter his death occurred nobody knows; two competent scholars place it in 385 B. C.; this date is at least approximately correct. If we accept the years 448 and 385 B. C. as the boundaries of his life we have a span of sixty-three years, a period long enough to permit a man to show the world what he can do. The eleven extant plays of Aristophanes amply illustrate his period of youth, the virility of his manhood, and the calmness which came with declining days.

We call him an Athenian, and he doubtless deserves the honor, but there are stories from ancient times which hint that he, or at least his father, was really a foreigner, from Egypt, or, though a Greek, from the Island of Rhodes, far away from Athens. Hardest of all for us to dispose of is the apparently attested fact that he was more than once indicted as a foreigner

claiming civic rights at Athens. His prosecutor was the famous or rather infamous demagogue Cleon, the very man whom Aristophanes was always ridiculing as a foreigner, as a "Paphlagonian Tanner" although he was neither a "Paphlagonian" nor a "Tanner." Cleon had a political motive in striking back at his tormentor, but the fact stands that he did bring suit against the poet as a foreigner masquerading as a genuine Athenian.

We know little about his father except that his name was Philippus, and that he owned some property on the island of Aegina. It is of the father rather than of the son that the stories about an Egyptian or Rhodian birth are told by certain ancient anecdote mongers. These ancient disputes regarding the birthplace of his father are of interest to us chiefly because from them we gain a vivid impression of the insistence of the Athenians upon native birth and parentage as essentials of Athenian citizenship. The naturalization freely conferred by the United States government upon aliens would have appalled the people of ancient Athens.

Of his wife we know nothing, not even the name. A late writer gives the mother's name as Zenodora, but this solitary reference is discredited by modern critics. A genuine Greek touch, this. The number of mothers and wives mentioned in ancient biographies is almost nil. Socrates' Xanthippe is a glaring exception to the rule that the views of literary men did not shine even by the reflected light of their illustrious husbands. The daughters of great men rarely win a line in an ancient biographical sketch. It is always the sons who receive attention. Accordingly we hear that Aristophanes had three sons,—Philippus (named according to Greek custom, after his paternal grandfather), Nicostratus, and Araros. It is an interesting fact that all three sons followed in the footsteps of their famous father as comic poets.

What educational advantages had the young poet? "Nothing known," says Mahaffy. But another writer assures us that he had "an excellent education, as is shown by his intimate knowledge of Aeschylus, Stesichorus and Pindar." A man who

possessed an intimate knowledge of these three masters had either studied them under an advanced teacher or had privately cultivated his taste for the best and most difficult authors.

What was his social rank at Athens? Was he admitted to the urbane circle which had been graced by the elegant Sophocles, or was he a jovial outsider like the Roman Plautus? We get a glimpse of his social status from Plato's *Symposium;* we must make allowance for the poetic imagination of the great philosopher but from his reference we are justified in concluding that Aristophanes was a man of culture, numbered among the intellectual and social élite of Athens.

Just one delectable item has come down to us regarding his personal appearance; from another comic poet, a fellow wag, Eupolis, we derive the weighty information that Aristophanes was prematurely bald. We may add this precious item to such other literary treasures as the freckles of Euripides, the red head and artificial teeth of George Washington, the pipe that Lincoln's mother smoked. On such details the writers of "True Biographies" thrive.

Of the three score years of life allotted him he spent almost forty in literary work. We can trace his activity from 427 to 388 B. C., a period of thirty-nine years. So clearly marked is his development, as shown in his extant plays, that we may fairly divide his literary work into three periods and assign each of the eleven plays to the appropriate group.

I 427-420 B. C. A period of exuberant boldness of utterance. Under this division fall *The Acharnians*, *Knights*, *Clouds*, *Wasps*, *Peace*.

II 420-405 B. C. The period when we note greater moderation in his attacks upon leading men. The plays coming under this period are: *Birds*, *Lysistrata*, *Thesmophoriazusae*, *Frogs*.

III 405-388 B. C. Characterized by a decline in vigor, and by a noticeable self-restraint in his attitude toward public men. Under this division fall but two comedies,—*Ecclesiazusae* and *Plutus*.

During the thirty-nine years of his literary activity he produced at least forty-four comedies, an average of one every

ten and a half months; this is somewhat rapid work as compared with Ibsen's record of about two years to a play. We have the titles of forty-four which are attributed to him, although there is some doubt about the authorship of four of these comedies. We are fortunate in having as many as eleven so well distributed that they represent the three periods of his literary career.

Aristophanes presents the anomalous spectacle of a man who poses as a defender of the gods yet burlesques the deities whom he professes to defend, and ridicules the religion of his countrymen. He attacks Socrates and Euripides for undermining the religious faith of the Athenians, yet he portrays Zeus, the King of the gods, in an undignified and even ridiculous light; he never ceases to satirize Dionysus, in whose worship the plays were presented. By some queer mental twist he considers his own ridicule of religion consistent with reverence, yet he is outraged by the attacks of the advanced thinkers on the popular religion. It is difficult to refute Mahaffy's assertion that these inconsistencies "throw a doubtful light upon his seriousness as a religious thinker."

Politically, he was an uncompromising conservative, seeing nothing but disaster ahead for Athens because of its abandonment of the old beliefs and the ancient political system. He would have the Athenians go back to the Golden Age of Marathon and the politics of "Aristides the Just"; to the days of 1776 and of Alexander Hamilton, as we should say. He could see nothing good in a democracy. One of his pet aversions was the demagogues, the lovers of the "peepul," who by their eloquence incited the citizens to embark upon enterprises which were freighted with national disaster.

The reader's attitude toward Aristophanes as a professed moral guide will depend largely now as it did in his own days upon the political views of the critic himself. There are in America today many who share his utter aversion to the demagogues; the word has in the course of centuries acquired a very uncomplimentary connotation, yet in the primary and original Greek sense it is perfectly harmless; it means liter-

ally "a leader of the people." We find in ancient Athens precisely the conflict which is waged today in every large American city, the clash between those who take as a model the glorious past and would pattern the future upon it, and those who proclaim their belief in progress and express utter indifference to history. There are today extremists in both parties, as there were in the days of Aristophanes. There are still heard in our older New England cities bitter laments over the falling away of the modern town frcm the political and social standing of the Emersons, the Hawthornes, and the Lowells. Some of the radicals of the other wing are represented by the congressman who is reported to have exclaimed: "History can't teach me nothin' " (a remark which was probably strictly true in his case), and that other famous modern man who is said to have declared that "History is bunk." Aristophanes represents the Emersonians. He was convinced that the radical politicians were steering the city straight for the precipice. Again and again we are told by literary critics that Aristophanes was a moral force of the noblest sort in his own city and that the ruin which finally overtook Athens was the direct result of disregarding his advice. Quite possibly this is true; undoubtedly Athens, yielding to the pleas of the "demagogues", committed fatal errors. But there is another side to the question. If we are to believe this great moralist, all the vice, all the villainy, was confined to the political party to which he was opposed; never a rebuke does he utter against rascality in his own set; his group is made up of immaculate statesmen, unselfish benefactors of their country. This is precisely the present attitude of many a political partisan. The wise voter today reads two newspapers,—one representing his own party, the other the organ of the opposition. At Athens we are acquainted with but one spokesman,—Aristophanes the conservative; his opponents are not represented by any extant play. Nor can we forget that this great "moral force" was probably one of the chief agencies which drove to his death the seer and prophet Socrates.

When we read his plays we find ourselves fairly dazzled by

his audacious brilliancy; there seems no limit to his boldness of attack, to his sudden and disconcerting thrusts at the political opponents who were in all probability at the time of the performance of his plays sitting in the audience. No politician, not even Pericles, could feel safe until the last word of the last sentence of an Aristophanic comedy had been uttered in the theater. In his diction he is astonishingly fluent; the Greek language lends itself admirably to the formation of compounds but only an Aristophanes could build the gigantic word which he constructs as the equivalent of "hash."

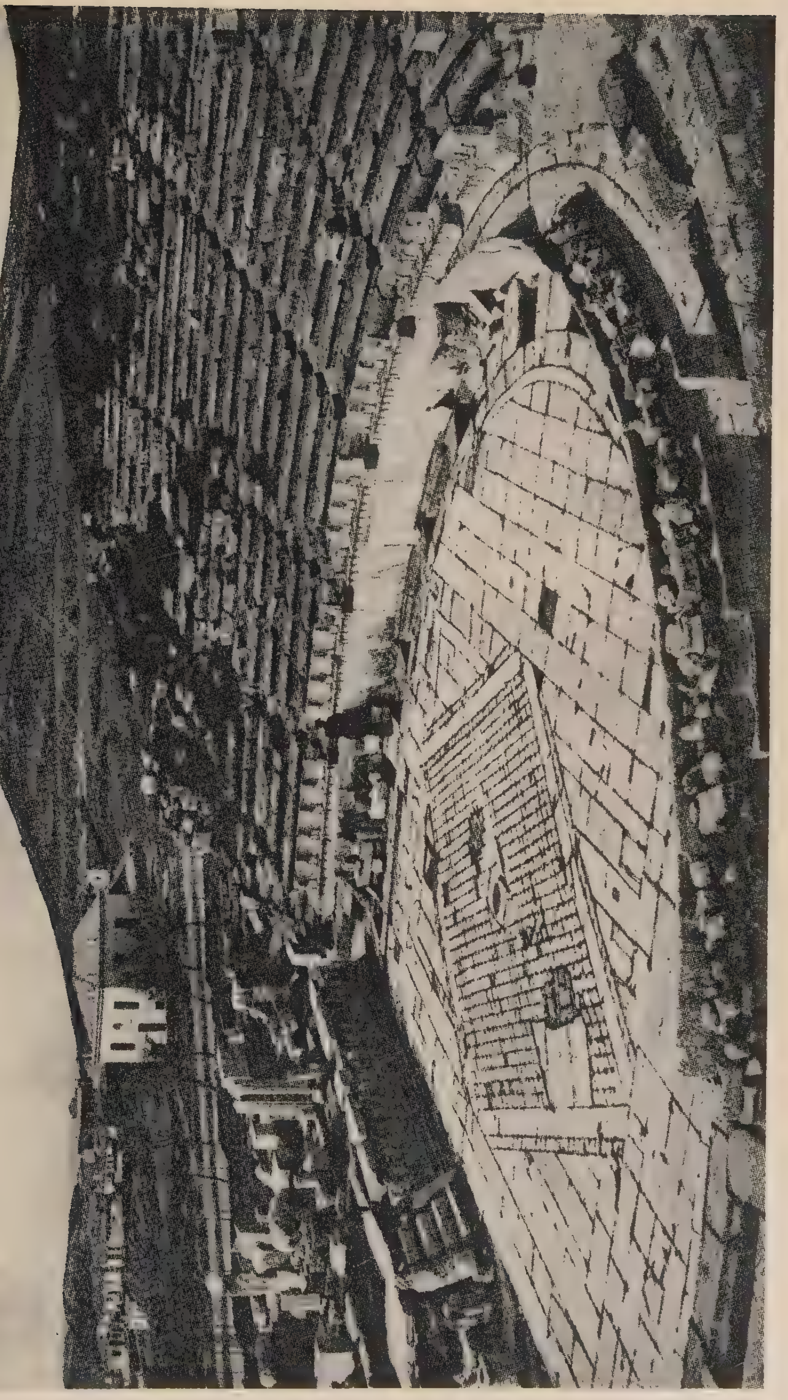
This swashbuckling politician, this facile compounder of words even more colossal than those of Aeschylus whom he so mercilessly satirizes often drops the comic mask and with startling suddenness rises into a lyric strain so pure in tone and devout in spirit that even so masterly a poet as Simonides might envy it. His exquisite odes have led certain admirers to claim that he was by nature a lyric poet rather than a dramatist. But this is going too far. The world is right in its judgment of Aristophanes as the greatest comic writer of Greece. He is primarily a dramatist, but we cannot restrain our wonder at the opulent genius who could not only pour out those slashing political attacks but at the same time soar aloft in a lark-like flight which would have made him a master lyrist had he devoted himself exclusively to that branch of poetry.

Chapter XIV

THE GREEK THEATER

In the city of Athens there are today extensive ruins of a building which must have been in its time an imposing structure. The enthusiastic modern admirer of the great Greek tragedians may still take his place on one of the remaining stone seats of the Dionysiac theater and allow his fancy to reënact a performance of an Aeschylean or Sophoclean tragedy of the palmy days of Greek drama; but the thoroughly informed traveler knows that the present building on the southern slope of the Acropolis is not the actual theater of Aeschylus, Sophocles or Euripides. These dramatists all lived in the fifth century B. C. The present structure was not completed earlier than about 330 B. C., seventy-five years after the death of Euripides; one critic, indeed, insists that the auditorium, including the seats, dates back to the days of the three great tragedians and that it was only the stage buildings which were added. If this scholar is correct in his conjecture, we are entitled to the thrill which comes from sitting in one of the very seats from which twenty-three hundred years ago the Athenian citizens watched the brilliant spectacle in the orchestra of the theater.

If, as critics generally agree, the present Athenian structure was not completed until about 330 B. C. under the financial administration of the statesman Lycurgus, what means have we of ascertaining the details of the original building? The problem is curiously like that which confronts the student of the Elizabethan stage. In the case of both the Greek stage and the Elizabethan theater, we have fairly satisfactory literary material for a reconstruction of the original buildings; for the Greek stage we have the extant works of Vitruvius, a



THE ORCHESTRA OF THE THEATER OF DIONYSUS AT ATHENS.

Roman architect, who wrote at about the end of the first century B. C.; he asserts that he derived his information from Greek authorities; in addition to Vitruvius, we have gleanings from other writers of antiquity. There still remain the ruins of several ancient Greek theaters; these attest upon the whole the accuracy of the statements of Vitruvius and the other writers. All these references, however, are to theaters later than those of the period of the great Athenian tragedians of the fifth century B. C. How may we determine the shape of these lost buildings? An effective method is a careful examination of the later Greek theaters; it is a fair assumption that these buildings are essentially a developed form of their predecessors; if, then, we can clearly ascertain and segregate the later additions we may feel a reasonable assurance that the remaining portions are survivors of the earlier buildings. For example, in the orchestra of the extant Athenian Dionysiac theater we find a mosaic pavement; it is absolutely certain that this was a Roman addition; it must be disregarded in our attempt to reconstruct the original Dionysiac theater. Various literary references will aid us in our work of reconstructing the lost original theater; an authentic source of information is found in the extant works of the classical Greek dramatists; an observant scholar can derive from these plays a considerable fund of reliable data regarding the shape of the theater in which they were performed. We have also the valuable evidence of some vase-paintings of the third century B. C.

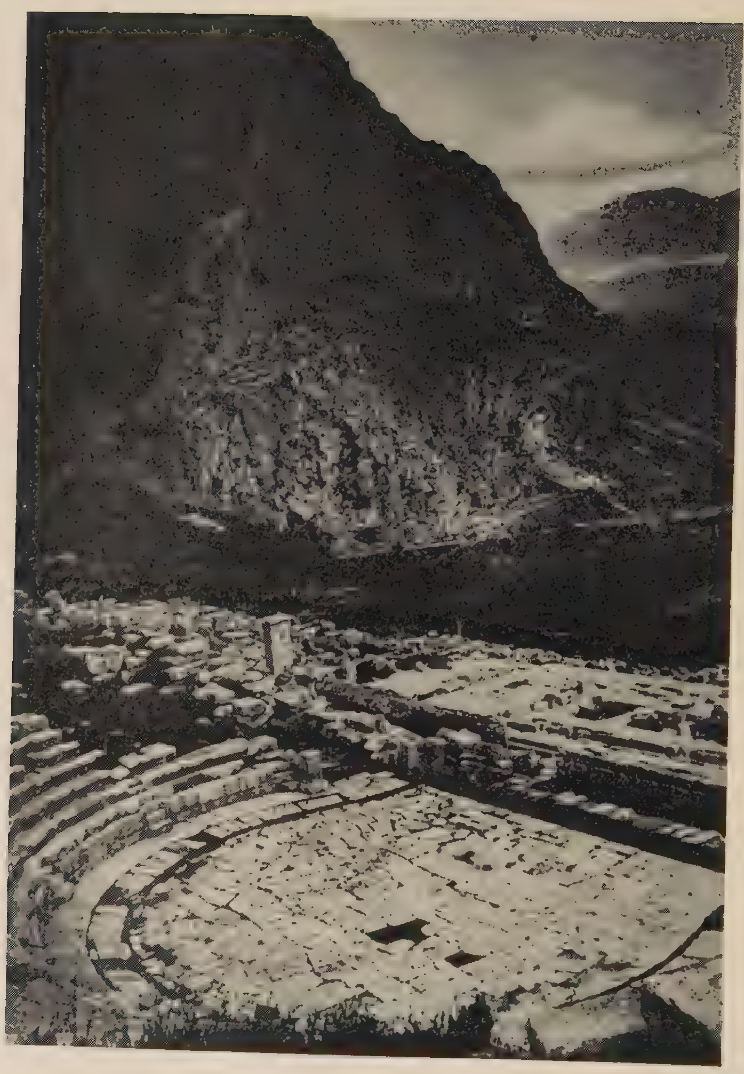
From the sources thus indicated three important elementary facts are discoverable at the very outset of our investigation: The Dionysiac theater at Athens was built on a hillside on the southern slope of the Acropolis; it was open to the sky; performances took place in the daytime and without artificial lighting. Additional information of importance may be noted but we shall begin with the discussion of these primary facts.

The Athenians utilized the slope of a hill on the south side of the Acropolis; they chose this particular site partly because a hillside offered an economical method of providing seating arrangements and partly because the southern slope of the

Acropolis was the spot with which the worship of Dionysus was intimately connected. Other Athenian sites could have been used more advantageously had not religious reasons dictated the choice; this southern position forced the audience to face the glare of the sun during the entire day of a performance; could they have erected the theater on the northern slope instead of the southern, the spectators would have had their backs to the sun and they would have been sheltered from the glare by the heights of the Acropolis behind them, but the need of erecting the theater within the sacred precinct of the patron god of drama was imperative.

The Athenians were not the only Greeks who found the site on a hillside economical and effective; numerous other extant Greek theaters were likewise built on the slope of a hill; it was not until the time of the Romans when the principle of the arch was well known and extensively utilized that we find theatrical structures built on level ground. Even the hillside site required some additional and artificial construction. The auditorium of the Lycurgus theater at Athens was largely cut out of the solid rock, but inequalities in the surface required the erection of substructures and supporting walls. When this massive building with its solid stone basis was finished we can imagine the satisfaction of the architects and their freedom from future anxiety as they recalled a disastrous collapse of the wooden seats which had brought to a sudden close a theatrical performance on the slope of the Acropolis one hundred and sixty-nine years earlier.

The theater of Dionysus was an open-air theater. The architectural knowledge of the day was not sufficiently advanced to permit the construction of a roof over such gigantic structures as the Greek theaters accommodating thousands of spectators; roofed buildings for public entertainment were known at Athens, but they were much smaller structures and were intended for musical performances presented before distinctly limited audiences. The roofless theater of Greece was the forerunner of the open-air auditorium of Rome, of the Spain of Calderon's day, and of Elizabethan England. It is



THE GREEK THEATER AT DELPHI.

interesting to note the modern revivals of outdoor performances,—the masques of Percy Mackaye, the Shakespearean productions of the Ben Greet players on the greensward, the modern reproduction in California of the ancient Greek theater buildings. Climatic conditions affect, of course, the practicability of modern open-air theaters. Percy Mackaye's masques and the Ben Greet greensward performances were necessarily limited in most places to the warmer months of the year; in England it is found necessary to utilize roofed theaters for winter performances; in the United States the climate of California is singularly favorable to open-air entertainments throughout the year.

The fact that the theaters were open to the sky and that the performances took place in the daytime relieved the theater managers of the modern problem of stage and auditorium lighting. Not until we reach the period of Molière's roofed theater do we encounter artificial lights; in his theater with its flickering tapers we note the first steps in the gradual evolution of stage illumination.

Dramatic critics are practically unanimous in the assertion that the Greek theater of the classical period had no curtain, although there is no doubt that at a later period curtains were employed. One of the very few critics of reputation who express doubt regarding the existence of a curtain in the theater of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides is the clear-headed English writer Haigh; he discusses the subject impartially and sums up his conclusion as follows: "On the whole it seems safest, until further evidence is forthcoming, to regard the question as an open one." In view of the unsatisfactory literary evidence adduced in support of the claim of a curtain in the unroofed Greek theaters of antiquity and the architectural difficulty involved, it is wiser to accept the practically unanimous agreement of scholars that the Dionysiac theater at Athens was not provided with a curtain. The unquestioned absence of a front drop-curtain in the Elizabethan unroofed open-air theater supports this conclusion.

Note the important influence which the absence of a curtain

exerted upon the construction of Greek and Elizabethan plays. In a modern theater the curtain almost invariably rises upon one or more actors already in position on the stage; there are, indeed, modern plays in which the play opens upon an empty stage; this device can be made very effective, but plays of this kind are infrequent. Very rarely does the final curtain in a modern play descend upon an empty stage although this method also is now and then effectively employed. In a Greek or an Elizabethan theater, on the other hand, a performance began with the entrance of one or more characters and the stage was invariably empty at the close of a play; an examination of our Shakespeare texts with their closing stage direction "Exeunt" will confirm this statement. It was the absence of a curtain which imposed upon the writer the obligation to end his play with an empty stage. The modern dramatist is under no such restriction; he may, if he chooses, bring down his final curtain in the midst of a conversation, as in Granville Barker's *Madras House*. A Greek or an Elizabethan audience remained until the speakers had all left the stage. In modern times, as recently as thirty years ago, it was customary for the entire company of actors to arrange themselves in an artistic group just before the fall of the final curtain; the audience instinctively felt that this assembly indicated the approaching end of the play. In the newest dramas the curtain may fall upon a group, upon a couple quietly conversing, or upon a silent character seated in a chair; not often does a modern playwright venture to bring down his final curtain on an empty stage.

It is a striking fact that until recent times playwrights have accepted without complaint the theater as they found it and have adjusted their plays to the prevalent conditions. When the theater was unprovided with a curtain the playwrights began and ended with an empty stage; when a curtain came into use they began and ended with characters on the stage. We hear of no chafing or complaints against theatrical conditions by Greek or Elizabethan dramatists; in these later days, however, a new generation of writers has arisen, boldly de-

manding that the theater adjust itself to the new technique; a startling request which theater men were at first unwilling and unprepared to grant. The producers have reduced to submission some of these audacious young playwrights by refusing to accept their manuscripts or to meet their requests. A striking example of a modern playwright who makes demands that some producers are unwilling or unable to meet is Eugene O'Neill. His later plays sometimes tax the resources of the most lavish producer; the length of his *Strange Interlude* startled many old-time theater men; his *Marco Millions* called for a very large outlay; the fact that Mr. O'Neill has been able to persuade producers to meet his dramatic requirements marks a new epoch in the annals of the theater.

The three essential parts of a Greek theater are: the orchestra, the stage, and the auditorium. Of these three parts the orchestra was the original, and, until the last days of genuine Greek drama, the most essential. We must, at once, clear up a popular misconception regarding the meaning of the word orchestra. So closely do we now associate the word with a band of musicians that a lecturer on drama is frequently asked the question: "What instruments were used in a Greek orchestra?" The Greek word means "a dancing place"; it has nothing to do with musical instruments; it is true that the musicians (usually a single flute player) had their place within the boundaries of the orchestra and near the central altar of Dionysus, but a Greek never thought of the musicians as an "orchestra"; to them "orchestra" meant simply the enclosure reserved for the stately dance movements of the chorus.

This "dancing place," or "orchestra" of a Greek theater was the original germ from which later developed the elaborate structure with auditorium, scene buildings and stage. At first it was a complete circle; in the center stood the sacred altar of the god; around this altar his votaries stood, danced and sang. This singing, dancing group of fifty men was called a dithyrambic chorus; it is thought that they wore a goat-like costume,

because the goat, the destroyer of the vines, was the appropriate sacrificial victim for Dionysus.

Brander Matthews and other critics call attention to the gross error of the common belief that the Greeks put a chorus into their drama. The very reverse is true; the Greeks added dialogue to the chorus. The chorus was the prime essential of the public worship of Dionysus; the erection of an auditorium was simply a convenience for the throngs who crowded to see the dancers and hear the singers. The elaborate stage buildings of later times were but the development of the tent to which the actors retired to change their costumes. If there was a stage in the classic Greek theater, (we shall discuss this in a moment) it could be shown that it must have been regarded by architects as of less importance than the orchestra. In the great theaters of classic times, precisely as in modern theaters, there were a few seats on the sides from which the view of the stage was obstructed; but in no extant Greek ruins do we find a place from which a complete view of the orchestra cannot be obtained. It is notable that in the earliest theater buildings the orchestra was a complete circle; in the magnificent ruins of the Greek theater in Epidaurus dating from the end of the fourth century B. C. we have a perfect specimen of the primitive circular form. The orchestra, originally circular, was in later Greek theaters replaced by a dancing place which in form was something less than a complete circle, something more than a semicircle. An exactly semicircular orchestra in an ancient theater on Greek soil is indubitable evidence of either Roman original construction or Roman reconstruction of an earlier Greek building.

The question of the existence or non-existence of a stage in the Greek theater of the classical period (fifth century B. C., the time of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides) is one of the most complicated in the whole domain of ancient Greek scholarship. The Greek stage and the "Aristotelian Unities" have for many years been famous battlegrounds. To a non-technical reader nothing could be more tiring or more unintelligible than a minute discussion of the problem of the Greek

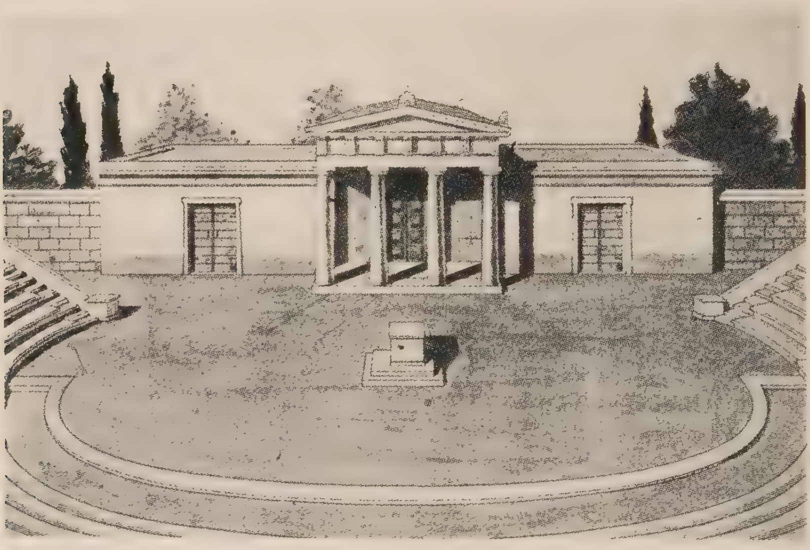
stage; a study of the question at first hand requires a profound knowledge of Greek and a thorough acquaintance with the controversial literature of the subject.

Probably not one out of a hundred of the readers of this volume cares whether the plays of Sophocles were performed on a stage or in the orchestra. Why, then, discuss the question? Simply because echoes of the strife are still heard in every book on ancient drama. Writers on this subject are divided into two groups,—the believers in the existence of a classical Greek stage, and those who deny it. To bring our readers into touch with the situation we shall give the names of the leading disputants and a brief summary of their arguments. The chief representative of those who deny the existence of a Greek stage in the time of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides is the German architect Dörpfeld; the leader of the opposing group is the Englishman Haigh, author of a well-known work, *The Attic Theater.*[1] The material used in the discussion consists of literary references and architectural remains. To a certain extent it is a quarrel between the literary scholar and the technical professional man. Haigh, a fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, is a genuine representative of the English point of view,—the antithesis of ingenious theorizing and subtle interpretation,—strong in the grasp of facts, convincing in their logical interpretation. Dörpfeld, the German, is first and foremost an architect, although his knowledge of ancient and modern languages is typically Teutonic in its thoroughness. His appointment as head of the German archaeological school at Athens some forty years ago aroused a mild furore in European academic circles; the literary scholars who had previously carried on the school protested the appointment of a "mere architect," but in a few months the derisive doubts changed into admiration. From personal experience as an auditor of Dörpfeld at Athens the writer of this chapter can unstintedly praise the architect as a lecturer on Greek ruins; what at the beginning of a Dörpfeld lecture seemed merely a tumbled mass of débris took on an intelligible form under the

[1] The Attic Theatre, A. E. Haigh, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

explanations of the trained specialist. At the close of his lectures on the Acropolis at Athens the listener felt a thrill of admiration for the man who could so convincingly reconstruct the temples whose heaped-up ruins lay before the eyes of the auditors.

Dörpfeld claims that in all purely Greek theaters of the classical period there was no stage; all the acting took place in the orchestra where, also, the chorus sang and performed its



Dörpfeld and Reisch.

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE ORCHESTRA AND BACKGROUND OF AN ANCIENT GREEK THEATER.

evolutions. The argument in support of this assertion is very complicated,—based largely upon the existing ruins and upon quotations from ancient authors of various periods. Haigh, in rejoinder, takes up the evidence as presented by Dörpfeld, examines it judicially and finds it unconvincing. He sums up his rebuttal as follows: "To suppose that the Greeks began without any stage of any kind, and then after so long a time suddenly erected a stage about twelve feet high, is a most unlikely hypothesis. But if we imagine that a stage existed from the first,

and that it was a low one in the fifth century, and was then gradually raised in consequence of the changed character of the drama, the process becomes much more intelligible. The presence of a stage during the later period is strong presumptive evidence in favor of an earlier one."

There can be no doubt that the Dörpfeld adherents command the field today. Practically all modern writers on drama accept the view that there was no stage in the classical Greek period; a few competent and impartial scholars like Capps call respectful attention to Haigh's view, though even he inclines to the Dörpfeld theory. It is almost impossible to name a modern scholar who by accepting the Haigh theory of the existence of a stage is willing to run the risk of being called "old-fashioned." Few of our readers will ever attempt to master the technical writings of Dörpfeld; Haigh's English work, on the contrary, is available in every large library and is written in a style so lucid that a careful perusal of the chapter on the Greek stage will not only give the reader a clear insight into the Dörpfeld viewpoint but will also furnish a striking example of the radical difference between the English and the German method of discussing scientific problems.

If one stands today in the orchestra of the theater at Athens and looks up toward the Acropolis he sees row after row of stone seats, concentric and running well up the slope. To provide access to this vast complex of seats, 17,000 by conservative reckoning, they were separated by narrow passages into fourteen sections called, in the Roman theater, where the same method of division was employed, *cunei* or "wedges." Every possible means of economizing space was employed; the passageways between the wedges were only 27 inches wide, rendering it impossible for two persons to ascend side by side and making it extremely difficult for them even to pass each other. The seats, also, were so constructed that the audience was crowded as closely together as on our modern baseball bleachers; there were no backs to the seats; there was no protection from the sun; the performance, beginning soon after sunrise, continued all day without intermission. Some of the

seats at the extreme back of the auditorium, far up the slope of the Acropolis, were carved out of the solid rock; the others, made of limestone, were removable; the limestone seats which were set loosely upon the bare ground largely disappeared during the Middle Ages. For centuries the ancient buildings in Athens and Rome suffered from the depredations of vandals who did not hesitate to wreck a priceless architectural gem for the sake of building-material for an insignificant structure; fortunately for the artistic world modern governments have put a stop to this destruction; the scanty remains of ancient Athens and Rome are now jealously guarded.

The attention of a visitor to the stone theater at Athens is attracted by a row of about sixty marble chairs, with backs; if he can read Greek he will note that on each seat is an inscription indicating the priest or public official for whom the chair was reserved. Appropriately enough the choicest of all, that in the center of the row, was reserved for the priest of Dionysus in whose worship the performance was held; this central chair, ornate with carving, was provided with a canopy. The reservation of choice locations in the theaters for priests, public officials and guests of honor, was usual in Greece.

Accustomed as we are to the remarkable scenic effects produced by modern artists it is difficult to realize the scantiness of the scenery in a Greek theater. For a considerable period nothing but the necessary properties was employed; the back wall of the stage (or of the orchestra if there was no stage) was undecorated. In the earliest plays of Aeschylus no scenery was in use; the introduction of painted scenery is attributed by Aristotle to Sophocles; Vitruvius in an ambiguous sentence is thought to ascribe the innovation to Aeschylus. In either case stage decoration originated not later than 458 B. C.; it was of a very simple kind; the back wall was painted to represent the location of the scene; in nearly every play it was a palace, a temple or a private house. As the locality very rarely changed this background of temple or palace or dwelling could often be used unaltered in successive plays. The scene is always laid in the open air; no interiors were ever depicted; the

box-set room-scene so common in modern plays was impossible in Greek theaters because of the narrow dimensions of the stage.

Among the numerous mechanical devices of the Greek theater were a few which require notice. The *deus ex machina* is fully discussed in the chapter on Euripides; three other stage machines frequently employed in tragedy were the *ekkyklema*, the *theologeion*, and the *periaktoi*.

In writing a play the Greek dramatist had to keep constantly in mind that his theater possessed no method of representing the interior of a temple or a dwelling and that Greek taste absolutely prohibited a murder or physical mutilation before the eyes of the audience. Homicides and bodily injuries are common features of Greek tragedy but they were always committed off stage. If there were no means of representing the interior of the palace or temple where the deed of violence occurred we may wonder how the dramatist solved the difficulty. The device which was employed seems to modern taste so clumsy and even absurd that despite conclusive evidence that it was actually used a few modern critics stoutly deny its existence on the ground that the aesthetic taste of the Greeks of the classical period would not have tolerated so crude a device. The mechanism, which was called the *ekkyklema*, was a low platform on wheels; it was pushed through one of the doors at the back of the stage for the purpose of exhibiting to the audience the bodies of the victims of violence. When in the *Choephoroi* of Aeschylus, Orestes had avenged his father's death by slaying his mother and her paramour, a door in the back wall was opened, the *ekkyklema* was pushed out upon the stage and Orestes was seen standing on this movable platform with the bodies of Clytemnestra and Aegistheus at his feet. The detailed working of the mechanism is unknown to us; it could not have been very wide, since it was pushed through a door; nor could it have been very deep because of the narrowness of the stage (or the limited dimensions of the orchestra), yet it was large enough to contain several bodies.

The *theologeion*, like the *deus ex machina* was a machine

employed to represent the advent of a supernatural being; it differed from the *deus ex machina* by manifesting the gods as standing or seated in heaven, whereas the *deus ex machina* showed them arriving in motion through the air. The *theologeion* was a platform which was pushed out through an aperture in the back wall; in structure it must have essentially resembled the *ekkyklema,* but whereas the *ekkyklema* was rolled out through a door on the level of the floor of the stage (or orchestra) the *theologeion* came into view high up in the air, a location natural enough in a scene depicting heaven.

Changes of scene in Greek plays were so exceedingly rare that it would be unnecessary to describe the device used to depict such a change were it not that after twenty-three hundred years of disuse the mechanism, name and all, has been recently revived as one of the methods of producing with the least possible delay a change of scene in a modern play. The name of the instrument is *periaktos* (plural *periaktoi*). In construction the device somewhat resembled a revolving bookcase except that it was three-sided rather than quadrilateral; one of these revolving triangular prisms was placed at each end of the back scene; each of the three sides contained a symbolical painting representing a sea or land scene; a dolphin and a waving line could represent the sea; a rock would suggest a mountainous region. Since the back scene usually depicted a temple, a palace or a private house, it would be possible by a revolution of the *periaktoi* to make an instantaneous change in the location of a temple or palace or house. The *Eumenides* of Aeschylus begins before the temple of Apollo at Delphi and ends before the shrine of Athene at Athens. The background of the temple could be left unchanged but by a swift revolution of the *periaktoi* and a change of the statue in front of the building the audience would instantly recognize the shift of location from Delphi to Athens. The exact date of the introduction of the *periaktos* is unknown, nor is there any evidence that it was actually employed in the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus, but that such a device was in use, and that the mechanism was

substantially as described, is attested by Pollux. Our chief interest lies in its recent revival for modern stage productions and the proof which it affords of the continuity of dramatic evolution through the centuries.

An Athenian citizen who remained strictly in town had but two opportunities during the entire year of seeing a theatrical performance. The two annual festivals of Dionysus in which plays were produced were the *City Dionysia* and the *Lenaea;* of these the *City Dionysia* at the end of March was by far the more important; at this festival the chief attention was given to tragedy; at the *Lenaea,* a winter celebration near the end of January, comedy held the place of honor. The *City Dionysia* lasted five days, possibly six; it was attended by great throngs of visitors, including foreign ambassadors, and representatives from allied states who at this time brought their annual financial tribute to the imperial treasury at Athens. The *Lenaea,* celebrated in January before the spring navigation was resumed, was much more simple, with an attendance limited largely to the Athenians themselves.

As an Athenian theatrical performance was essentially religious, admission was at first as free as it is in a modern sacred edifice. Before long practical difficulties arose; to make certain of a seat the more enterprising citizens began to arrive at the theater on the night before the performance; foreigners attempted to usurp the choicest of the free seats; fist fights frequently disgraced the sanctuary of the god. To relieve the confusion it was finally decided to charge a nominal admission fee and to sell the tickets in advance. The price of an entire day's performance was fixed at 2 obols (six cents,) a very small sum as it seems to us, but by no means a trifle in those early days. Soon the complaint arose that the worthy poor were being shut out from the sanctuary because of their poverty, and the rich were usurping the seats. Here was a chance for the professional demagogues: "It is a shame that honest God-fearing citizens whose only crime is their poverty should be excluded by these insolent rich parvenus. I move that the admission fee be given to the poor from the city

treasury." Regardless of the motive of the politician who proposed the change his plea was intrinsically sound; that such a motion would carry was a foregone conclusion. The reader can readily supply from his knowledge of modern political life the remainder of this chapter: demagogue outbidding demagogue in handing over the theater funds; grants not only for theatrical performances but for other public entertainments. The rich began to apply as greedily as the poor; the entertainment fund finally absorbed the bulk of the revenues of the city. Then the crowning and successful bid for favor by a fawning demagogue,—a law making it a capital offense even to propose to divert to any other purpose the amusement fund. And this at a time when Philip of Macedon was plotting ceaselessly and mercilessly the ruin of Athens; this at the moment when Demosthenes was warning his fellow-citizens of the peril sweeping down from the north. Demosthenes *versus* the Demagogues. The inevitable result: Philip and his hirelings won "that dishonest victory at Chaeronea, fatal to liberty."

A kind fate has handed down to us a large number of metal discs which were actually used as theater tickets twenty three centuries ago; they are usually of lead, frequently of bronze, and occasionally of ivory or bone. One of the most interesting of the extant tokens is a small leaden coin, stamped with three comic masks, below which is the name of the playwright Menander, while above is the title of the play for which the ticket was sold, *The Prophetess.*

The state owned the theater building at Athens, but the actual control of the structure during the period of the dramatic performances was in the hands of a lessee who paid the city a stipulated sum and was allowed to keep the entire amount of the paid admission fees. A clause in his contract obliged him to keep the theater in good condition; if he failed to do this the representatives of the city made the necessary repairs and subtracted the cost from his receipts. We have from ancient times a curious scrap of information to the effect that "toward the end of a performance, if there were any vacant seats the lessee occasionally admitted free of charge those who had no

tickets." With admission money from the city treasury free for the asking, these belated free entrants must have been mostly those who after receiving their money had spent it in some other way. The lessee had to solve a problem almost identical with that of a modern manager,—free seats; the profits of his lease depended upon the receipts at the box office, but he had to set aside the first twenty-four rows of the theater for non-paying guests; nor could he select the objects of his favor; the state made the selection; the classes of favored persons were "nominated in the bond." We do not know whether or not the state reimbursed him for these free seats, but we are well informed as to the occupants: priests, highly placed magistrates, the judges of the dramatic contests, high ranking army officers, ambassadors from foreign states, orphan sons of fathers killed in war, public benefactors and their male descendants. These occupied twenty-four rows of free seats; everyone else paid the uniform admission fee of two obols *per diem*.

The question regarding the presence of women and children at the dramatic performances, especially the satyr-drama and comedy, has been thoroughly discussed by critics; the net result of the debate is a rather general agreement that women and boys were present at all three classes of performances. The difficulty in accepting this conclusion lies in the coarseness inherent in the satyr-drama and comedy. It is difficult for us to imagine children and refined women sitting through some of the scenes depicted in the plays of Aristophanes; the objection is met by the assertion that Greek women did not share the scruples of their refined modern sisters. Some scholars endeavor to relieve the Greek women of the implication of coarseness by asserting that although Greek comedy was actually open to women and children, the more refined women remained away, allowing the *hetaerae* to monopolize the privilege of attendance.

From a reference in Plato and another in Theophrastus it seems clear that slaves were at least occasionally present in the audience; bondmen were sometimes privileged to earn a little

money; these slaves could pay the small admission fee; others may have accompanied their masters; Theophrastus represents an Athenian citizen as taking both the pedagogue (who was regularly a slave) and his sons to the theater. As to whether slaves had special seats some uncertainty is expressed by modern writers, but Blümner [1] regards it as unlikely that they sat with the citizens. The question of special seats for the various classes in the Greek theater has been much discussed; it has been suggested that in seating the audience distinctions of rank and social caste were strictly observed. Modern scholars believe that besides the seats reserved for priests, officials, and distinguished guests, special sections were provided for the Council of Five Hundred, for the young men between the ages of eighteen and twenty, for the women and for the foreigners. This classification of the audience seems well attested by references in ancient writers. The exact part of the theater in which the women and the foreigners sat is not known; Haigh interprets certain references in ancient authors as meaning that the women sat at the back of the theater, and foreigners at one side of the auditorium. The cost of admission to all paid seats was the same; there was no gradation according to location as in a modern theater.

[1] The Home Life of the Ancient Greeks, Blümner, Funk & Wagnalls Company, New York.

Chapter XV

GREEK ACTORS

Inasmuch as the names of very few Greek actors are known to modern theater-goers, we shall have to devote this chapter to a discussion of Greek acting in general with an incidental introduction of the names of a few of the most famous actors of ancient Greek times and a discussion of their individual methods of acting.

The Greek word for actor is *hypokrites* from which our word "hypocrite" is derived although in the transition from Greek to English the word has taken on a comparatively new meaning. The Greek verb from which the noun *hypokrites* comes means "to interpret or answer"; *hypokrites*, therefore, originally means one who answers the songs and speeches of the chorus or who interprets the old legends.

Greek actors were hired by the State and should be carefully distinguished from the chorus; the chorus was chosen and paid by a wealthy citizen called the *choregus*, that is, "leader of the chorus."

The number of actors in a Greek play never exceeded three. At first the performance was entirely given by the chorus; Thespis introduced a single actor, Aeschylus a second, and Sophocles a third. The authorities agree that the Greeks never advanced beyond the third *actor* although the number of *characters* in a play might considerably exceed three. There has been considerable discussion over the means of reconciling the limited number of actors with the larger number of characters found in certain plays. The simplest explanation is that the actors "doubled,"—that is, one actor played two or more parts. There are, however, difficulties confronting us even when we accept this theory of doubling. An examination of the plays of

Aeschylus will show that there were rarely more than two speaking persons on the stage at a time and that in Sophocles and Euripides there were never more than three, and yet even in the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus we find no less than four characters in the first scene. Likewise in several passages of Sophocles four real actors are required. Scholars have found trouble in reconciling these facts with the theory that there were never more than three actors. Most investigators dispose of the difficulty by saying that though there were never more than three speaking characters on the stage at a given moment, there might be any number of mutes. Others go so far as to say that in special cases a fourth actor may have been employed to utter a few lines but that these extras were not to be regarded as members of the regular acting profession. Mantzius attempts to solve the difficulty by giving to the word *hypokrites* or actor a purely official meaning; he thinks that to each poet was assigned by the state a number of actors, not exceeding three; if he needed more he had to provide them at his own expense and these extra actors were not regarded as official *hypokrites*. Mantzius says that this theory relieves us of the difficulty of believing that in a play calling for eight or nine characters the leading actors were forced to rush out of the theater, make a hurried change of costume and mask and return only to utter a few unimportant lines before running out again and resuming the costume of the more important characters. In spite, however, of these difficulties in accepting the theory we usually find no special trouble in assigning the important rôles in a Greek play to three actors. There is sometimes, however, difficulty in deciding to which one of the three actors the various minor rôles were assigned.

The actors were graded permanently in three classes according to their skill, and bore special designations; the first-class actors were known as *protagonists;* the second-class as *deuteragonists;* the third-class as *tritagonists.* This was a permanent classification; just as today we speak of "leading men" and "leading women," so in a Greek play the leading man was known as the protagonist and although he might occasionally

double, his rank was permanently that of the "leading actor." We may expect then that the protagonist will take the leading part in a Greek play. This principle will often enable us to decide which was intended to be the leading character; for example, in the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus, it has been disputed whether Clytemnestra or Agamemnon is the leading personage; we know, however, from ancient authorities that the part of Clytemnestra was taken by the protagonist whereas that of Agamemnon fell to the lowest of the three actors—the tritagonist.

The fact that there were but three speaking rôles on the stage at a given moment necessarily influenced the construction of a Greek play. No provision could be made for the promiscuous conversation between a considerable number of persons which we find upon a modern stage. On the other hand the small number of actors had some advantages; the dialogue gained greatly in clearness and simplicity owing to the small number of persons taking part in it. This simplicity was especially well suited to Greek tragedy because it was naturally of a severe and statuesque character and did not lend itself to rapid dialogue between a large number of persons. In Greek dialogue it is somewhat unusual even for three characters to converse at once; in most cases, one of the three stands silently by while the other two carry on the dialogue; the two who are conversing change from time to time but only on rare occasions and for a brief period do we find all three speaking.

Before the time of Aeschylus when only a single actor was required, the poet himself took the part of that actor; when, however, the second actor was introduced by Aeschylus the actor's profession became distinct from that of the poet since obviously the poet could take but one of the two parts in the dialogue. Sophocles, because of the weakness of his voice, was unable to appear in his own plays although we know that in one of them he performed on the harp and in another he gracefully played ball; in these rôles he doubtless appeared merely as a mute character. We do not hear of any tragic poets performing in their own plays after the time of Sophocles; we

must then regard the profession of acting as originating in the fifth century B. C.

Once instituted the profession grew rapidly in importance. Toward the middle of the fifth century prizes were instituted for the best actors as well as for the best poets; the names of the actors began to be recorded in the official list of victories side by side with those of the poets and the choregi. In the fourth century B. C. the art of acting outshone even the art of dramatic writing. To such an extent had the importance of the actor's profession increased that in Aristotle's time a play depended for its success more upon the skill of the artist than upon the genius of the poet.

This supremacy of the actor had a harmful effect upon playwriting; the poets began to write their plays with a view to exhibiting the capacities of the actors; scenes which had no connection with the plot were introduced for the sole purpose of enabling a star to make a display of his talents.

Here we have the beginning of what is still regarded by certain critics as the "pernicious habit" of setting parts to actors; the dispute regarding the propriety of this is still waging. Brander Matthews stoutly defends it. It would be interesting to trace the growth of this custom from its origin in the fourth century B. C. down to the present. We should have to investigate the custom of Shakespeare and of Marlowe. There are indications that certain of Shakespeare's characters were carefully adjusted to the personality of the actor; when in the rencing scene in *Hamlet* the queen says of Hamlet, "He's fat and scant of breath," Shakespeare was doubtless referring to the personal appearance of Richard Burbage who at the period of this play had become rather corpulent. It seems to be agreed that Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* was fitted to the gigantic stature of Alleyne. Sardou wrote play after play to utilize the special talents of Bernhardt. Brander Matthews calls attention to the fact that so skillfully was Sardou's *Fédora* fitted to Bernhardt that the incomparable Duse found herself unable to adjust herself to this part.

The whole structure of a Greek tragedy was designed to fix

the interest of the audience upon some central figure; the subordinate actors were strictly forbidden to attempt to outshine the protagonist; if they had finer voices they were forced to moderate and restrain their tones so as not to diminish the importance of the leading character. Not only did the rules require this as a dramatic principle but the protagonist, for personal reasons, strenuously insisted upon his rights.

Even what is today technically called "preparation" for the entrance of a leading character was discussed in ancient times. Today most leading actors prefer not to be upon the stage at the rise of the curtain. The audience is carefully "prepared" for the entrance of this character; the others discuss the leader, excite the interest of the audience and thus make everything ready for his appearance. Most of Shakespeare's plays will be found to conform to this principle of preparation. And yet even Shakespeare begins his *Richard III* with the impressive entrance of the leading character who as he enters utters the opening words of the play:

> "Now is the winter of our discontent
> Made glorious summer by this sun of York;
> And all the clouds that lower'd upon our house
> In the deep bosom of the ocean buried."

In thus beginning his play with the entrance of the leading character Shakespeare is putting into practical application the theory expressly formulated by the Greek actor, Theodorus, who claimed that the first speaker in a play always attracts the attention and sympathies of the audience; Theodorus, therefore, never permitted any other actor to appear upon the stage before himself.

In Greek plays the deuteragonist acted the secondary parts; but very frequently these rôles were so important that modern critics, in the absence of definite information by he ancient commentators, are in doubt as to which is the leading character and the next in importance. In the *Antigone* of Sophocles, for example, there cannot be any doubt that Antigone was

the leading character; nevertheless Creon occupies a larger amount of space in the play than Antigone and is hardly less important. We see then that the deuteragonist ranked well up in importance with the protagonist and required a talent and technical training but little inferior to that of the leading actor. When we come, however, to the tritagonist we find a much lower degree of ability necessary; Mantzius thinks that this actor could hardly be considered above the grade of mere utility man; he took what in modern times would be called the "heavy parts"; this included tyrants, heralds and similar rôles that did not call for any great display of pathos or emotion; all that was needed was a strong voice and some ability in declaiming the lines; he was especially useful in speaking the prologue, which required little more than good elocutionary ability.

The costume of the tragic actors was entirely distinct from that of the chorus, and different also from that of the ordinary citizen; they represented the gods and the heroes of the old Greek mythology. It should be noted, however, that in mounting their plays the Greeks paid no attention whatever to historical accuracy or archaeological minuteness. They made no attempt to imitate the exact details of the costume worn in the Homeric period where the scene of so many of their plays was laid. They simply endeavored to attire their tragic actors in a dress unlike that of daily life. The difference, however, was not fundamental; the costume was more flowing and dignified than that of the ordinary citizen. The garments were in every variety of brilliant color. To give a superhuman appearance to the actor who was representing gods or ancient heroes his bulk was increased by padding his chest and limbs and placing thick wooden soles under his feet. Inasmuch as his body was enlarged to superhuman proportions it was necessary to increase proportionately the size of his face and head. This was done by adding a mask and placing at the top of the mask a structure known as the *onkos*, which added to the height of his coiffure.

In the chapter on masks we present some general charac-

teristics of the Greek mask, but we have purposely reserved some details which are closely connected with the actor's profession. A Greek writer named Pollux gives us minute information regarding tragic masks; he describes no less than

A GREEK TRAGIC ACTOR.
An Ivory Statuette.

twenty-eight species, distinguished by the style of the head-dress, the color of the complexion, the height of the *onkos* and the expression of the eyes. As soon as an actor came into sight the audience could form a fairly accurate conception of the character whom he was impersonating. There was what was

technically known as the "White Man," deriving his name from the flowing white hair and the full beard; by way of contrast there was the "Black Man," distinguished by his dark complexion and his black curly hair and beard; the "Old Woman" had long flowing hair; the "Young Maiden" was recognized by her fair complexion and her short curly hair parted in the middle; the "Bride" had a rosy complexion and long wavy hair.

GREEK THEATRICAL MASKS.

The tragic masks were necessarily typical rather than minutely individual; in Old Comedy, however, in which definite individuals were ridiculed, the art of the portrait mask-maker had reached so advanced a stage that the audience instantly recognized the identity of the person whom the actor was burlesquing. So alert were the spectators in identifying the masks of public men that there is on record an instance in which a Greek comic dramatist could not induce the mask-makers to construct a portrait mask of the powerful politician whom he desired to lampoon in the theater.

We have spoken of the thick soles of the tragic boot which was intended to add to the stature of the actors and give them an appearance of superhuman grandeur. This boot with the

wooden sole was known as the *cothurnus;* the wooden sole was painted in various colors; the thickness of the sole varied according to the social rank of the character represented; a king wore a boot with a larger sole than did his attendants. The *cothurnus* was an awkward contrivance which made it difficult for the actor to move about without stumbling; in fact, accidents on the stage sometimes occurred. A famous mishap is that of Aeschines, who while playing as a tritagonist tripped and fell on the stage and had to be picked up by a chorus-trainer; such an accident exposed the unhappy actor to the ridicule of the audience and indeed to the last day of his career as a political orator his great opponent, Demosthenes, never ceased to twit Aeschines on his mishap.

TRAGIC MASK.

To the Athenians, accustomed as they were to the stately majestic figures with padded bodies, thick soles, awe-inspiring masks and a great headdress, there was no suggestion but that of majesty and awe; they seemed to them living embodiments of the gods; when the audience heard the sonorous words of these walking statues they were filled with religious awe and delighted with the artistic presentation; but this traditional method of acting continued until its novelty had worn off and later writers began to poke fun at what seemed to them an absurdity. Lucian ridicules these padded actors and their hollow mouths which looked as if they were going to swallow the audience. Haigh repeats an amusing story which has come down to us from Philostratus regarding the overwhelming impression made upon a rustic audience by these awe-inspiring figures. A strolling company of Greek actors appeared in a town in Spain where such plays had never before

been seen. As the tragic actor with his mighty body and mask with its enormous mouth came upon the stage, the country people were dumb with amazement and rigid with horror; but when with sonorous voice the actor began to utter his tragic lines a panic fell upon the audience; they made a wild rush from the theater as though pursued by some demon from the lower regions.

A Greek actor had to undergo a very careful training and each performance had to be studied with the minutest care. In a Greek play there were three modes of delivery: (a) ordinary recitation, that is, speech accompanied by gesture but with no musical accompaniment; (b) song accompanied by flute or harp and supported by dancing; (c) a rhythmic declamation accompanied by flute, emphasized by gesticulation and sometimes accompanied by dancing. One of the indispensable qualifications of an actor was clearness of utterance. He was obliged to use at Athens the purest Athenian pronunciation without a trace of dialectic or foreign accent. He had to be especially careful about the rhythm of his diction; it was an unpardonable fault to add or omit a syllable or to spoil the rhythm by an error in accent. A chief essential was a strong and perfectly trained voice; we have seen that Sophocles was obliged to abandon acting because of the weakness of his voice. A Greek actor had to speak in the open-air to an immense audience; we know that the Greek theater had remarkably fine acoustic qualities, but nevertheless it was a task requiring a tremendous voice and robust physical strength to be heard throughout the boundaries of these great open-air buildings. The use of a mask necessarily increased the difficulty of articulation. Added to the effort required to make his voice heard were the obstacles imposed by the padding of his body and the thick soles of his boots. His gesticulations were necessarily limited and more or less formal; he could never run in any part of the performance; the difficulty in walking was increased by the long robes which fell to the feet. An actor was judged primarily by his voice rather than by his bodily movements; the test applied to him was practically identical with that of our modern opera singers; if

the voice was superlatively good the audience tolerated more or less schematic gestures.

The actors practiced their vocal exercises early in the morning before breakfast; they thought that the voice was more flexible before eating. They were strictly temperate in food and drink. We know that they devoted most minute care to the training of their voice. Cicero tells us that they spent hours in practicing declamation while they were in a sitting posture and that in order to school the voice against fatigue they used it while they were posing in various attitudes. We get a vivid idea of the task imposed upon a Greek actor when we remember that in addition to the heavy labor of addressing through a mask an enormous audience while hampered by his padded body, his long robes and his thick soles, he was obliged at frequent intervals to dance and pose in various attitudes.

Chapter XVI

MASKS

We find in various critical treatises, ancient and modern, statements attributing the invention of the mask to Aeschylus while others give the credit to Thespis; these assertions should be interpreted as referring to certain improvements or innovations rather than to the first introduction of this device. Haigh[1] and Mantzius[2] agree that they were used in the Dionysiac celebrations before the time of either Thespis or Aeschylus. Haigh contents himself with the following general statement: "Masks, or similar devices, were a regular feature in the old Dionysiac worship, and were probably inherited as such by the tragic stage, and not invented of set purpose." Mantzius discusses more minutely the question of their origin in Greece; he finds them in use in Bacchic processions before the beginnings of Greek drama; he pictures a procession in which the Bacchantes represented the dead (Among the attributes of Dionysus is that of a conquerer of death); these Dionysiac Bacchantes seem to have formed a procession ghastly as well as ghostly; garbed in white grave-clothes, their faces were smeared with white lead which lent to the countenance a deathly pallor; in place of the white lead they sometimes concealed their faces with white cloths, which at some point in the procession were stripped off, revealing beneath the cloths a horrible death mask.

In another chapter we speak of the innovation which Thespis made in drama by introducing an actor entirely distinct from the chorus. Did he also invent the tragic mask? Tradition ascribes this device to him; we are told that at first he simply

[1] The Attic Theatre. Haigh. Clarendon Press, Oxford.
[2] History of the Drama. Mantzius. Duckworth & Co., London.

painted his face with white lead or stained it with vegetable juice, but that later he employed a disguise of linen, leaving it unstained and unpainted. Mantzius, while admitting that the invention was credited to Thespis, argues very plausibly that it is unreasonable to suppose that at as late a date as that of Thespis (about 535 B.C.) the Greeks were unacquainted with the mask in Bacchic processions. He interprets the legend as meaning that Thespis, though not the actual inventor, introduced newer forms of facial disguise. Mantzius enumerates the three methods which tradition ascribed to Thespis; the first was a coating of white lead; the second, a staining of the face with the juice of the plant known as purslane; the third, a mask of painted linen.

If, then, they were in use long before Aeschylus, in what sense is he to be considered the "inventor of masks"? He should be regarded as an innovator and improver rather than as an original inventor. Haigh asserts that Aeschylus "was the first to employ painted masks, and to portray features of a dreadful and awe-inspiring character." We do not hear of any radical changes after the time of Aeschylus.

The stage masks worn by the actors in the historical period of Greek drama were made of cork, wood, bark, or linen covered with plaster. A marked difference between ancient and modern usage is that those of the Greeks covered not simply the face but the entire head; they were tied under the chin by a cord or ribbon; masks covering simply the face were known to the Greeks, but we have no reliable evidence that they were used in dramatic performances. The beard and the hair were sometimes of real hair, sometimes of wool or a similar substance. At the top we note a cone-shaped projection which adds several inches to the height of the actor's body; this projection is called the *onkos;* a framework under the hair served to support the elaborate coiffure at the top of the mask.

The Greek mask had some practical advantages; one of these was that it permitted the enlargement of the face, which was necessary to correspond to the increased bulk of the padded actor; furthermore, the limitation of the number of

speaking actors to three necessitated the assumption of more than one rôle by the actors in plays where the number of characters exceeded three; when an actor was forced to appear in more than one rôle in a play the "doubling" was greatly facilitated by a change of facial disguise. Since women's rôles were always portrayed by men, the wearing of a woman's mask was essential in female characterization. A further advantage was that mentioned by an ancient writer (Aulus Gellius) who assures us that the mask added to the resonance of the actor's voice.

Many of the disadvantages which accompany the modern use of this disguise were evident in the ancient Greek theater. The superhuman dimensions of the mask brought the lips well below the actor's own mouth; a mechanism of some sort was probably necessary to carry the sound down to the lips of the mask. No varieties of facial expression were possible without a complete change of mask; even though a large variety were employed, the number was far too small to permit minute subdivisions of individual characters; they were of necessity limited to general types such as kings, priests, slaves, women, and children; these types were, however, so sharply differentiated that as soon as a character appeared before the audience, his mask indicated the sex, the age and the social position.

On passing to Rome, we are confronted by a very different situation; the sacred element of drama had practically disappeared. When Menander, the Greek playright, wrote his comedies for the Athenians, the religious background was still prominent in the minds of the audience; but when Plautus and Terence worked over, for a Roman audience, the Greek comedies of Menander and his contemporaries their auditors never gave a thought to the religious significance of the plays. If, then, the actors in the Roman theater wore masks it must have been for a different reason. It seems clear that in the days of Plautus and Terence the actors did not wear them; wigs and paint sufficed for disguise; yet it is credibly reported that later, in the period of Cicero, the famous actor

Roscius wore a mask and that other Roman actors of that time frequently, though not invariably, used them. A fanciful story has come down to us to the effect that Roscius was cross-eyed and as a special concession to their favorite actor the Romans allowed him to conceal his defect. It seems also well attested that they were worn in the little improvised rustic comedies which were called *Atellanae* from the Campanian village in which they originated; the young men who participated in these improvised comedies wore masks, not, indeed, for religious reasons, but that they might conceal their identity while scoffing at local conditions and contemporaries. An additional reason for wearing them in these *Atellanae* may have been that since actors as a class were held in great contempt, even amateurs considered it prudent to conceal their faces. It was the consideration in which Roscius was held by the Romans that led to an extension of the privilege of wearing masks by professional actors, but it was a privilege, never a right; an unpopular actor who availed himself of the concession always ran the risk of incurring the deadly insult of a demand by the audience that he unmask himself and show his face; this demand, which must have injured the artistic career of an actor, was intended as a savage reminder that after all he was only an actor and, as such, a social outlaw.

When the pantomime became the favorite form of dramatic diversion under the Roman Empire the actors wore masks which were distinguished from the earlier forms by having the mouth closed; in the pantomime the performer portrayed his dramatic scenes in perfect silence; by his bodily movements he conveyed to the spectators the thoughts and actions of the characters whom he was depicting.

A striking proof of the importance which masks have recently acquired in the dramatic world is the finely illustrated article by Wladyslaw Theodore Benda in the new edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica.* He has devoted himself so closely to this study that the phrase "Benda masks" is familiar to all students of the drama.

Benda is a Polish illustrator and painter; his illustrations have appeared in *Scribner's*, the *Century* and other periodicals. He was born and brought up in Cracow, Austrian Poland. He received his art training in the National Academy of his native Cracow. He came to the United States about the year 1900; on his arrival he went to California where he designed scenery and costumes for the *Cleopatra* of his famous aunt Helena Modjeska. In 1903 he moved east to New York City, where he engaged in the practice of his art.

He became known through a fortunate accident. In 1919 the editor of *Vanity Fair* saw some of Benda's masks in his studio; he was so profoundly impressed by their artistic beauty that he asked permission to reproduce them in his paper; to *Vanity Fair* is due the credit of the first public notice of Benda's work; other papers were quick to follow, and his artistic fame was established.

Benda made his first mask in 1914 to be worn at a masquerade; it was a very simple affair, made of a few pieces of wrapping paper glued together and painted. We are told that at the time of the construction of his first mask he had no historic knowledge or background for his work; he knew nothing about their earlier use; he was not even aware of the revived modern interest in them; he had never seen one except the stereotyped faces of "tragedy" and "comedy" on theater façades and theatrical programs. In the following year he made two new masks; since 1915 he has been making additions at the rate of six to ten a year. In 1926 his collection numbered fifty-six.

His masks appeared on the stage in 1919 in the *Greenwich Village Follies*, New York; it was at this first appearance that Margaret Severn scored a brilliant success in her dancing by appearing in four different disguises. In the following year Mr. C. B. Cochran made a contract with Benda for a London production; Mr. Cochran engaged Miss Grace Christie, the American dancer, to appear in masked dances in his production; from this time his masks attracted ever-increasing atten-

tion until they are now widely used on the stages of Europe as well as of America.

They fall under three general groups. The most attractive are realistic faces of beautiful women; the workmanship is so perfect that the observer finds it difficult to realize that he is not gazing at a living human face. A second group is made up of grotesque creatures—demons, fantastic animals, hobgoblins; the third consists of men's faces in caricature; it includes all types of faces, a wide range of expression, many exaggerated into intentional absurdity.

Benda tells us how he makes his masks and the material which he employs; it is not a hasty or haphazard process; indeed it usually takes a full month to complete one of his more elaborate creations. Materials of many kinds have been employed by various nations,—wood, paper, wrought-iron, papier-mâché, linen, copper, rubber, silk, clay; Benda has found by experience that the most satisfactory is stiff paper glued in layers coated with shellac, and finally painted in oil colors. In constructing them he sometimes cuts out of Bristol-board the various pieces,—nose, ear, chin, etc., and then glues them together. Another method is to make a model of the head in clay, form a cast and then, after pressing small pieces of paper into the mold, glue them together.

Benda is very sanguine that in the large out-of-doors pageant the mask may be put to an enlarged and especially effective use.

To sketch the use of masks in various parts of the ancient and modern world would be equivalent to describing the religious rites of all the ancient civilizations and of the primitive period of nearly all modern nations. We should have to roam from Patagonia to Japan, taking in on our world trip the cult of our own North American Indians. We should be obliged to devote a chapter to the primitive native Australians; in Asia we should find it necessary to visit Tibet, Ceylon, China, Japan, Java, Siam, Burma; we should be forced to study the Papuans of Melanesia. In Africa we should find the natives of Congo wearing carved wooden masks; even in various parts of Europe

we should discover peasants still wearing disguises in the May dances that are a relic of rites which antedate in origin the Christian era. The investigator will find in the article by Benda in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* details regarding their use in all parts of the world, both in ancient and in modern times.

The recent attempts to introduce masks on the stage are not a dramatic novelty, they are merely a dramatic reversion. These revivals practically all fall within the twentieth century and as yet they are partial and half-hearted. Attempts have been made to use them with a portion of the cast in modern plays, but we have not yet reached the point where we venture to disguise all the characters without exception as did the ancient Greeks. We are not lacking in modernists who impatiently await this full resumption; Gordon Craig is the most impatient of these restorationists; in one of his utterances (quoted by Benda) he speaks of "masks, that paramount means of dramatic expression without which acting was bound to be degenerate." Craig is in the van of the reformers who in pleading for the adoption of the mask on the stage are harking back twenty-three hundred years to the days of the classical Greeks. We use the term "reactionary" in no invidious sense; if a reversion to the mask will really advance the cause of drama, by all means let us reintroduce it. We merely call attention to the fact that many a modern dramatic novelty which brings celebrity to the innovator is really a revival of a very old device.

What are the arguments for and against masks? Margaret Severn, the well-known dancer, sums up the case for dancers; most of her arguments apply equally well to stage actors. Most actors are opposed to them because it makes it impossible to register on the face the flow and ebb of passionate thought. The frequenter of the moving picture house knows full well the great possibilities of the "close-up" when utilized by a competent actor; though not a word be spoken the spectators can trace in the eyes the surging of thought, the hesitation, the suggestion, the determination. The

use of a disguise deprives the actor of this great opportunity of manifesting thought through the eye and the muscles of the face.

The advocates of the mask see in this absence of facial expression a distinct advantage rather than a loss; they wish to eliminate the personality of the actor and substitute an ideal face which may be used symbolically to represent abstract ideas. Craig sees no advantage in facial expression; he believes that the actor has but incomplete control over his muscles; Mr. Craig would ultimately substitute marionettes for the living performer, but, until the stage is ready for this final step he would put the actors into masks, eliminating all play of countenance and depending on the disguise to express exactly the idea which the playwright intends. The critics of this theory reply that unless there is a ceaseless process of taking on and putting off the masks it will be impossible to simulate the rapid changes of thought of which the human countenance is capable.

Hiler, an American artist and designer, has constructed a curious semi-mask which is designed to combine the advantages of the covered and the open human face. His semi-mask leaves the eyes, the cheeks, and the mouth exposed so that the actor may have the advantage of the unimpeded expression of eyes, cheeks, and lips, while concealing the other parts of the face in such a way as to partially secure the advantages of the mask.

One or two modern attempts to revive the mask in drama deserve mention. In December 1926 at a performance of *An American Tragedy* at the Longacre Theater, New York, a device in the form of a transparent portrait was hung in the back wall of the setting which represented Clyde Griffith's room; through this portrait-mask the baser side of Clyde's nature spoke.

The most striking employment of masks in modern drama is that of Eugene O'Neill in *The Great God Brown;* in fact, this is regarded as the first play of modern life in which they are used throughout as an integral part of the

portrayal. O'Neill uses them to portray the moods and the development of character of his *dramatis personae.* This particular method is a distinct innovation in drama; though masks had been employed at least as far back as the days of the Greek drama, no one had used precisely the method employed by Mr. O'Neill. Shakespeare had by a reflective soliloquy revealed the moods and the inmost thoughts of his characters; Hamlet's "To be or not to be" betrays the soul probings of the troubled prince; Iago reveals to the audience by his solitary musings the depth of infamy into which he has plunged. The French classical dramatists, tabooing the soliloquy as bad art, devised the *confidant* and the *confidante* into whose listening ear the speaker could pour his information or his tale of woe; the *confidant* was simply an artful device to avoid the soliloquy. O'Neill has far outgrown both the soliloquy and the *confidant.* In his *Hairy Ape* he had shown his contempt for textbook rules by allowing his leading character to talk to himself throughout the entire play. "Pedagogues make rules and genius breaks them." After showing by a glaring example that he defied the edict against soliloquies he indicated, by his adoption of the mask, that he had no intention of using monologues extensively; he sought a new and more effective method of expressing the inner feelings of a man who is not given to sharing his secret thoughts with others. In *The Great God Brown* O'Neill's characters portray their double personality,—the man the world sees and the man as he sees himself. Mask on, Dion is alert, aggressive, facing the world; mask off, he is a timid, shrinking idealist. The theater audience sees both the Dion with the mask and the Dion without it. The world sees only the Dion of the mask.

In the Pasadena (California) production of O'Neill's *Lazarus Laughed,* April 1928, three hundred masks were used ranging in size from those of the Greeks to the semi-mask of the Italian *commedia dell' arte* and the ordinary full-face form.

Chapter XVII

WOMEN AND BOYS ON THE STAGE

It was two thousand years after the world's first recorded play before woman found herself tolerated on the English stage. To the Greeks the idea of an actress was simply intolerable; Aristophanes in his wildest flights never imagined an Athenian woman wearing a mask and declaiming before the eyes of the men of Athens; the Athenian attitude is succinctly summed up by Pericles in his famous funeral oration: "To a woman not to show more weakness than is natural to her sex is a great glory, and not to be talked about for good or for evil among men."

To the haughty Romans a woman on the stage was equally unthinkable. Strangely enough, however, we find at a somewhat late period actresses in one particular species of Roman drama—the mimes; the women were technically known as *mimae;* the mimes in which they appeared were of the vilest character and they had to participate in stage scenes that forbid description.

No women took part in the pageants of the Mysteries nor in the subsequent Moralities. Even in the days of Shakespeare they never appeared on the stage; smooth-faced boys acted all the female rôles. Not until the days of Charles II and the Restoration did women get a foothold on the English stage; an attempt in the days of Charles I failed ignominiously; a French *comédienne* who ventured to come before an English audience was hissed off the stage.

With the Restoration and the accession of Charles II a new dramatic régime was inaugurated. Charles had spent his exile in France and had been an assiduous attendant of the French theater; he had become accustomed to the sight

of women on the French stage. In the very first year of his reign, 1660, we have a record of the first rôle ever acted by a professional actress in an English theater; it is true that before this time English ladies and gentlemen had taken part in masques but their share in these entertainments was strictly that of amateurs; the acting parts were given to professionals.

This innovation of 1660 was a very different thing; it was an epoch in English drama. At a new London theater in Clare Market a woman appeared, choosing as her rôle Desdemona in Shakespeare's *Othello;* this actress was Mrs. Margaret Hughes.

At first the number of venturesome actresses was small and the companies of boys still found abundant engagements; but within ten years after their entrance the women had become firmly established; we begin to read of such famous names as Nell Gwynne, Moll Davis, Mrs. Barry, Mrs. Bracegirdle and Mrs. Oldfield. These actresses grew in wealth as well as in professional reputation; Mrs. Oldfield began her stage career on a salary of fifteen shillings a week; ultimately she advanced to two hundred pounds a year.

An odd yet natural result of the advent of women was an increase in the number of female characters in the newer plays. Critics have called attention to the relatively small number of these rôles in the Elizabethan plays before 1660 and the increased number in the plays written after that date. These critics attribute the increase in the number of female rôles to the greater number of actresses available for these parts. Even the older plays were rewritten and enlarged to meet the new conditions; the parts of Lady Macbeth and Lady Macduff were lengthened to provide greater acting opportunities for the actresses; D'Avenant and Dryden collaborating in a new version of *The Tempest* created a sister for Miranda, and a companion spirit for Ariel.

We can trace to ancient Athens the appearance of boys on the stage; the major parts were always taken by men, but we occasionally find in the extant Greek plays minor rôles which called for an extra boy. Euripides, in particular, was

fond of introducing juvenile rôles; in his *Alcestis* the young Eumelus laments the loss of his mother; in the *Wasps* of Aristophanes we have a subsidiary chorus of boys side by side with the regular chorus; this must have been made up of boy "extras."

In England we find boys playing an exceedingly important part in stage production. We may make a broad distinction between amateurs and professionals, but we cannot always determine the exact boundary line between the amateur boy-actor and the professional. Performances such as *Ralph Roister Doister*, written by Udall, Master of Eton, for performances by his own pupils were, of course, solely for amateurs; on the other hand, the youths who performed the women's rôles in Shakespeare's plays may be classified as professionals. Between these extremes come such groups as those of the "chapel" and those of St. Paul's, which though primarily engaged for religious services, found time to take part in dramatic performances which were at first purely amateur but gradually enlisted the services of such master dramatists as Jonson, Chapman, and Marston. The boys became involved in the dramatic feuds and quarrels of the professional writers, and they ranged themselves with one or the other of the disputants; indeed, as one critic puts it, the schoolmaster became the first professional playwright, the choir-master the first professional manager, and the schoolboy and the choir-boy the earliest professional actors.

We know of several boy choirs serving in various religious establishments, but by far the best known to modern readers are the choir of St. Paul's Cathedral, known as "Paul's Boys" and those of the Chapel Royal known as "The Children of the Chapel." About the year 1600 "Paul's Boys" were installed in a private playhouse within the precincts of the cathedral itself; among the important plays which they attempted were those of Marston, and Dekker's *Satiromastix*. "The Children of the Chapel," selected from the choir boys of the Chapel Royal, were established in a new theater in Blackfriars at about the time when their rivals the "Paul's Boys" were given their own

dramatic home in St. Paul's Cathedral. In their new theater the Chapel children acted Ben Jonson's *Poetaster* and his *Cynthia's Revels;* they were a decided success both as actors and as financiers; even after the death of their patron Elizabeth, they continued their corporate existence.

We may assign the dates 1600-1607 as that of the greatest success of the boys of Paul's and the Chapel. Undoubtedly, a portion of their success came from the musical skill which they seem to have utilized in the form of concerts preceding their dramatic performances. Though the years 1600-1607 mark the period of their greatest prestige it is not possible to determine with equal precision the date of their first participation in dramatic performances; we are told, however, that up to the building of the first public theater in London, 1576, their companies dominated such dramatic performances as had been given in scattered places. The erection of a regular public theater, demanding a permanent company of professional paid actors, gave a new aspect to the situation; the amateurs, or semi-professionals, as we may perhaps call them, found it hard to compete with trained men who could give all their time to their professional work. At once a spirited rivalry arose between the boys and the men. In 1578, two years after the opening of the first public theater by Burbage, we learn that there were "eight ordinary places in the city occupied by players," although only six companies were allowed to appear at court,—those of the Earls of Leicester, Warwick, Sussex, Essex, the Children of the Royal Chapel, and Paul's Boys. Evidently the boys were now facing formidable competition from at least four competent professional companies.

The so-called "War of the Theaters" in 1600–1601, gave the boys a welcome opportunity to renew their contest with their adult rivals. This "war" coming at the precise moment when the boys had been installed in their new quarters at Blackfriars and the Cathedral gave them a position of strategic importance in the public eye. This famous "war" of the dramatists started in 1598 when John Marston attacked Ben Jonson's style; Jonson, always in fighting trim, promptly struck back,

and the war was on; in a twinkling the other dramatists of the day chose sides. The quarters of the boys' companies served as fortifications; the combatants established their headquarters at Blackfriars and the Cathedral. Ben Jonson and George Chapman entrusted their plays to the Children of the Chapel at Blackfriars; John Marston allowed the Children of Paul's to bring out for the first time his earliest and best plays. Even Shakespeare's company was for a time drawn into the fray; the company showed its sympathy with Ben Jonson by producing at the Globe his *Every Man Out of His Humor.* After this show of sympathy with the doughty Ben the company withdrew from the fight and left him in the hands of his allies, the boys of Blackfriars; they proved themselves skillful fighters as well as graceful actors. The novelty of hearing Jonson's ponderous invectives rolling from the lips of impish boys struck the public as something unique and delightful. For two years, 1600-1601, while the fight was hottest, the boys' companies swept the public into their own theaters and left the adult companies stranded.

These years, 1600-1601, were disastrous for the adult companies; even Shakespeare's able men felt the strain. Much ink has been used upon the question of Shakespeare's participation in the merry war; the consensus of opinion seems to be that in his easy-going good-natured way he stood aloof viewing the combat with interest but without personal animosity. Yet he seems to have felt the impropriety of the immature jibes of the boys at the adult members of the profession, and in *Hamlet* he lets Guildenstern dismiss the whole episode with the contemptuous remark: "O, there has been much throwing about of brains."

By the end of 1602 the war was practically over and the combatants were reconciled; in 1603 Jonson was writing his *Sejanus* for Shakespeare's company; two years later the opposing champions, Jonson and Marston, sealed their treaty of peace by joining Chapman in the writing of *Eastward Ho.*

The heyday of the boys' companies was 1600–1607. Their subsequent history up to 1613 is complicated and somewhat

obscure; after 1613 they are of little importance; they were finally forced to give way before their riper competitors, the adult companies; the better actors among the boys' companies joined the Burbage and Henslowe organizations.

ROMAN PERIOD

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CHAPTER XVIII

ROMAN DRAMA

THE Romans were not a theater-going nation. That they had drama of some kind goes without saying; where shall we find a nation, ancient or modern, that is absolutely devoid of the dramatic instinct? The Romans had theaters, they had writers of tragedy, they had comic playwrights; nevertheless, the theater did not mean to the Romans what it had signified to the Greeks.

Any detailed account of Roman drama must practically be limited to Plautus, Terence and Seneca. We can cite many additional names, but a few fragments, accessible only to specialists, are the sole survivals of those little-known writers.

When we search for the beginnings of Roman drama, we come at once upon a religious element. Precisely as Attic Greek drama is believed by most scholars to have had its origin in the cult of a god, Dionysus, so we can trace the commencement of Roman drama back to the worship of the rustic divinities; one goddess, in particular, Victoria, deserves special mention because in the course of time her worship culminated in the famous *Ludi Romani* of which we shall speak later.

In our account of Greek comedy we found it necessary to make only a grand division between the Doric and the Attic, and we described the fusion of the two forms resulting from the migration of the Doric *Susarion* from Megara in the Peloponnesus to Içaria an outlying district of Attica between Athens and Marathon. To trace the divisions and the development of Roman comedy is a more complicated process; we shall have to mention three or four dramatic movements which preceded the work of Plautus and Terence. The several primitive comic developments in Italy,—some of Latin origin, some entirely

independent of Latium, might in the course of time have become welded into a genuine Italian comedy had not a powerful alien influence suddenly acquired so strong a hold upon the nascent Italian comedy that in the blending of the national and the alien the foreign element almost submerged the native. This invader was the Attic New Comedy; we can even fix the precise date of the irruption. In 240 B. C. a Greek named Livius Andronicus, from Tarentum in Southern Italy, brought out a tragedy and a comedy written in the Latin tongue; these productions, translated or at least adapted from originals, were so vastly superior to the crude native products that Greek drama became the model for nearly all subsequent Roman writers. The comedies of Plautus and Terence were accordingly based upon Greek originals, but we must not overlook the important fact that the native Italian element was not entirely obliterated by the stranger; in Plautus, and, to a less degree, in Terence, we may detect robust native touches blending with and vivifying the elegance of the Greek from which the plays were taken.

That mysterious people, the Etruscans, whose cryptic language is still a standing challenge to the linguists of the world, contributed at least one important word to the dramatic vocabulary. Every time a modern actor speaks of "the histrionic art" he is using the very word by which these predecessors of the Romans designated an actor; from the Etruscan word *hister* the Romans formed the word *histrio;* in the adjectival form "histrionic" it still survives. From Etruria came more than the word *histrio*. In southern Etruria stood a city named Fescennium; it was celebrated for its harvest festivities in honor of the rustic and woodland divinities; from Fescennium is derived according to many authorities the name *Fescennini Versus*. Another suggested etymology is *fascinum* the "evil eye," a belief in which was not only prevalent in ancient times but has even descended to the peasants of modern Italy; to avert this "evil eye" an emblem equivalent to the Greek *phallus* was employed.

The Fescennine Verses were lyrical dialogues, responsive

strains, sung at harvest festivals; at a later time they were employed largely in weddings and triumphal processions. They were usually extemporaneous and were characterized by banter and coarse jokes; the personal abuse ultimately became so scurrilous that it was restrained by law. The Fescennine Verses never reached an advanced stage of literary development; nor did they ever attain actual stage performances although they undoubtedly contained genuine dramatic elements.

The second form of primitive comedy which we must consider is the Satura. Finding its original inspiration in a desire for something more refined than the *Versus Fescennini* it took form in part under the influence of some Etruscan dancers who in 364 B. C. were brought to Rome in the hope that they might placate the gods who were believed to have inflicted a pestilence upon the city. These Etruscan actors, called *ludiones,* erected a stage in the Circus Maximus. This stage, the first ever erected in Rome, was the outcome of a desire to appease the angry gods; to accomplish this the Romans planned the enlargement of the great national festival known as the *Ludi Romani.* We can scarcely lay too much stress upon this visit of the Etruscan *ludiones* in 364 B. C.; it is really the earliest recorded event in the history of Roman drama. The incident furnishes evidence of the religious basis of Roman drama, because the *Ludi Romani* had been established in honor of the goddess Victoria. This visit of the Etruscan *ludiones* is of further significance in that it served as a model for the improvements in the Fescennine Verses which ultimately developed into the Satura. So far as we can trace them, the various steps which led to the replacement of the Fescennine Verses in popular favor by the Satura were as follows: in general it was an improvement of the quality and form of the verses; they were supplemented by instrumental music and dancing; this addition was due directly to the influence of the Etruscan *ludiones* who had executed silent mimic dances to the accompaniment of the flute (Livy expressly tells us that the dances of the *ludiones* were *sine carmine ullo*). We may now describe more specifically the rise of the Satura: A number

of Roman youths while dancing to the sound of a flute on a stage especially erected for this purpose sang a number of jocular verses of a responsive nature; while conforming in general to the primitive Fescennine Verses they differed specifically in that they were not wholly impromptu. These, so far as we can trace them, are the intermediate steps between the Fescennine Verses and the species which in its fully developed form is known as the Satura.

In the Satura the dramatic element was more marked than in the Fescennine Verses. We must think of the Satura as real drama, though primitive. Although it had no logically developed plot, it dramatically represented rustic scenes from the daily life of Latium, and it approximated more closely to the developed drama of later times than had the Fescennine Verses which it had replaced.

Precisely as we found a difference of opinion regarding the etymology of the Greek word comedy, we find a marked divergence concerning the primary significance of the word Satura. By far the greater number of scholars refer it to a Latin root *sat* meaning "full," "stuffed"; a smaller though eminent group insists that it is derived from the same Greek root as the word *satyrus*, "a satyr." The Latin etymology *sat* would suggest a composition "stuffed with" or "full of" various elements; even the adherents of the *satyr* etymology attempt to put into the word the idea of "stuffing" or "cramming full"; thus Ribbeck, the famous German scholar, though insisting that the word Satura is derived from "saturi," and that it means "the goat play of the saturi," that is, satyrs, inserts into the word the idea of "fulness" by suggesting that these "saturi" (satyrs) were "filled with meat and drink." This theory, though upheld by several competent scholars has not succeeded in establishing itself. As far back as the days of the Latin grammarian Diomedes (4th century A. D.) the etymology of the word was in dispute. Diomedes mentions four distinct theories of derivation:

1. The Greek word *satyra*, because the Roman *satura*, like the "goat songs" of the Greeks was laughable but coarse.

2. A dish containing fruits of various kinds and called *satura* because it was really *filled* with the fruits.

3. A kind of sausage (farcimen) called *satura* because it had a very miscellaneous content.

4. A law, *lex satura*, which comprised several legal matters under a single head, precisely as a Roman satura contained under one head a number of constituent parts.

In most modern treatises on Roman drama we find acceptance of the time-honored theory that Satura is connected in derivation with *lanx satura*, a dish filled with fruits of various kinds. In any case, Satura is to be considered an adjective, not a noun, and in whatever sense the word is used we must supply a substantive of some kind, *lanx* (dish), *lex* (a law) or *fabula* (literary composition).

Since the verses of the Satura were at first only in part extemporized, a certain amount of care must have been expended in devising the non-extempore lines; in fact, there are indications of thoughtful preparation both in the composition of the lines and in their stage performance.

Remembering that the *Satura* and the *Versus Fescennini* were of purely Latin origin, and that after the introduction of the Satura at Rome some degree of care, at least, was devoted to writing and acting them, we can readily see that we have the beginnings of a comic drama as purely national as was that of Athens. We can only speculate as to what would have developed from these beginnings had not Livius Andronicus introduced the foreign element which swept away so many native features.

From the beginning the Satura was characterized by a more careful preparation than were the extemporized Fescennine Verses. It was only a question of time when this nascent drama should enter the domain of genuine literature; when, however, it had crossed the threshold, it still retained the "medley" or "miscellaneous" attribute which is inherent in the very name "Satura." By the time of the well-known writer, Ennius, (239-169 B. C.) the Satura had become a full-fledged branch of literature. Only fragments of the work of Ennius have

come down to us, but we know enough of his writings to feel justified in asserting that they were, as one critic puts it, "a mixture or medley of metrical pieces." Even in the elegant and polished satires of Horace, Persius and Juvenal, the critical reader is impressed by the "miscellaneous" nature of each production. In modern times, the word satire had taken on a connotation of sarcasm and irony; this bitterly ironical element is not an essential characteristic of the early satura, though doubtless the yokels of Latium were by no means slow in making game of their fellow-villagers. It was Lucilius (about 180–103 B. C.) who contributed the element of invective which finally became a dominant characteristic of Roman satire. The example of Lucilius in giving to Satura this special feature was so widely followed that he is frequently called the father of Roman satire.

Roman satire, like its kindred forms, served its turn and was superseded. Forced to give place to the Graeco-Roman comedy of Andronicus and his followers it fought for existence, contributed some brilliant names to the history of Roman drama (Lucilius, Horace, Juvenal, Persius) and then found itself reduced to the position of an after-piece (*exodium*) where it served much as did the Greek satyr-drama to relieve the mental strain of audiences which had been unnerved by the horrors of tragedy. Even from this humble place at the end of a performance it was finally ousted by the *fabulae Atellanae* and the *mimi*.

The improvised comedies called *Atellanae* derived their name from the little village of Atella, now Sant' Arpino in Campania. As the Satura was an improved form of Fescennine Verse, the *Atellanae* were in turn an improved Satura. Rude skits were performed by masked rustics; their attacks were directed at local conditions; the fun seems to have been not so coarse as that of the Fescennine Verses. The important feature of these Atellan plays is that the characters finally became permanent as stock rôles which have come down to the modern Italian drama; among the burlesque characters which became

traditional are: Pappus, the old man; Bucco, the braggart, and Maccus, the glutton.

The fame of the Atellan plays spread to Rome about 200 B. C., after the overthrow of the independence of the Campanians in 210. At Rome they were taken up by the young patricians, who under the safe disguise of masks could jest as rudely as they wished. So popular were these plays at Rome that they were even deemed worthy of the attention of literary men; in the written form they were used also as after-pieces (*exodia*) particularly after tragedies. Here we have once more a parallel to the Greek satyr-dramas.

In the improvised form, precisely as in the later Italian *commedia dell' arte*, only the main features of the plot were determined in advance; all details were left to be supplied by the ingenuity and quickness of repartee of the actors. The native element in these comedies was very pronounced; in marked contrast to the regular practice of Plautus and Terence they never took their themes from Greek life. They were gradually supplanted under the empire by the Mimes and the Pantomimes.

We may make a broad division of Roman comedies into *palliatae* and *togatae*. The essential difference is that *palliatae* were based upon Greek originals; the *togatae* confined themselves exclusively to native themes.

The word *palliata* refers to a Greek garment known to the Romans as a *pallium*. The chief representatives of *comoedia palliata* are Adronicus, Naevius, Plautus, Ennius, Caecilius and Terence. Of Andronicus, Plautus, Ennius and Terence we speak elsewhere. The name Gnaeus Naevius appears in any complete list of writers of *palliatae;* when, however we study the fragments of his plays and read of his turbulent life we cannot help wondering why he is ranked as a writer of *palliatae* rather than of *togatae*. The date 235 B. C. in which he brought out his first play fixes his chronology with sufficient accuracy for our purpose. The one striking thing about his comedies is the vigor of his invective and an employment of acrid personalities which remind us of the great Athe-

nian political satirist, Aristophanes. Naevius braved the powerful Metelli family and they promptly struck back; no more pungent line was ever penned by the sententious Romans than the grim retort of the Metelli to the pen-pricking of Naevius:

Dabunt malum Metelli Naevio poetae.

And they kept their word. Naevius was given a bitter taste of the power of an enraged Roman aristocrat; rescued temporarily by the Tribunes, he showed that he had not yet learned the lesson of submission. The next reprisal of the Metelli was exile, whence no Tribune could rescue him; in 204 B. C. or perhaps a few years later, he closed his stormy career in "pent-up Utica." The fate which overtook him was a significant warning to his brother satirists that it would not be conducive to longevity for a Roman comic writer to emulate the abuse which the Greek Aristophanes heaped upon the politicians of his own day. Cleon the Athenian "tanner" was a puny creature compared with the aristocratic Roman Metellus.

The use of native themes by Naevius would, as we have suggested, apparently stamp him as a writer of *togatae* rather than of *palliatae*. This presumption is apparently strengthened by the fact that he is credited with the creation of a new species of native Roman literature, the *praetextae;* in these *praetextae* he took themes of national interest for his basic material; nevertheless, in spite of his treatment of national Roman themes in his *comoediae* and his *praetextae*, these works are justly placed under *palliatae* for in form and general method of treatment they follow Greek models.

Between Plautus and Terence falls Caecilius, who, after the death of Plautus, ranked at the head of the poets in *palliatae* until eclipsed later by Terence.. This Statius Caecilius, an Insubrian Gaul, found his way to Rome about 194 B. C.; he seems to have been a captive in war,—at any rate he was under bondage of some sort, for we read that he was "liberated by his master" who was a member of the Caecilian *gens* and that he was given the name Caecilius after that *gens*. A suggestion, possibly malicious, has been made that his fame was

due not so much to his own plays, as to the supreme skill of the actor, Turpio, who portrayed them; be this as it may, men of the rank of Horace, Varro, and Cicero have something good to say about him.

Caecilius died in 168 B. C. Of his immediate successor Luscius Lanuvinus, we can say only that he served as a connecting link between Caecilius and Terence; his plays have all disappeared. After the death of Terence, Sextus Turpilius (died 103 B. C.) and others continued to write *palliatae* but the creative impulse had practically ceased by 150 B. C. The plays of Plautus and Terence were still brought out, but henceforth we hear of very few original *palliatae* and none of those which were produced have survived.

Fabula togata need not detain us long; its career was brief and it has left us only scanty fragments. It gets its name from the *toga,* a well known Roman garment. The title *fabula togata* graphically describes a kind of play in which native characters and manners were handled. The actors in *togatae* wore the national dress, the *toga,* in contrast to their rivals, the actors of *palliatae* who wore the Roman equivalent of the everyday dress of the Greeks,—the *himation.* The location of the *togatae* usually centered in Rome although we also find these plays occasionally localized in some small town which the writer desired to satirize.

A later name for *togata* was *tabernaria,* derived from *taberna,* the booth or workshop used by artisans; the name *tabernaria* indicates the humble themes covered by this type of play; the general tone was coarser than that of the more elegant *palliatae;* but though coarser it was decidedly more virile than its polished rival.

The entire life of the *fabula togata* is encompassed by a century, beginning about 169 B. C. with Titinius, a contemporary of Terence and ending about 79 B. C. The list of writers which has come down to us is notably small,—Titinius, Quinctius Atta and Lucius Afranius are mere names to the general reader, and little more even to the most industrious investigator.

It is a striking fact that in spite of the treatment of purely Roman themes the *togata* never won the popular favor which was accorded to its rival, the *palliata;* it soon gave way to the *Atellanae* which had been revived in literary form and to the *mimus* which was destined to play so important a dramatic rôle under the later Republic and the Empire.

The Latin word *mimus* comes from a Greek verb meaning "to imitate." In Latin the term is applied both to the "imitation" and to the actor who "imitates."

The *mime* was a pantomimic and farcical representation of low life, brought out on a stage. Limiting itself at first to a single scene and one person, it gradually enlarged its scope until under the Empire it drew its subjects from nearly all the earlier forms of comedy. At first it was purely a stage performance with no pretensions to literature, but in Cicero's time writers began to devote themselves seriously to this branch of comedy.

The *mimus* was introduced into Rome at a very early time from the Greek colonies in southern Italy; the part of Italy in which these colonies had settled was known as Magna Graecia. While we cannot fix the exact date at which the *mimus* entered Rome, it is regarded as contemporaneous with the first appearance of the Roman stage. The *mime* first appears in literature at the end of the Republic; we find the credit (or the discredit) of its introduction given to two or three writers,—D. Laberius, Publilius Syrus, and, possibly, L. Valerius.

With its appearance in literature we note a broadening of its scope, its absorption of the main features of all the various forms of comedy and farce which had preceded it, the *palliata*, the *togata*, and the *Atellanae.* When it had found its way into literature it continued under the Empire to please the crowd; even when the higher forms of drama were struggling to hold their precarious position, the *mime* retained its grasp on the public taste; it survived until the very end of the Empire. Perhaps no greater proof of the hold of the *mime* upon even the highest circles at Rome can be given than the reported question of the dying Augustus to his friends as to whether

he seemed to them to have played well the *mime* of life. (*Ecquid amicis videretur mimum vitae commode transegisse*, 99.)

Mimes were performed especially at the *Floralia*, a festival in honor of the goddess Flora. We can trace the celebration as far back at 238 B. C.; from 173 on they were regularly produced in front of the temple of Flora on a stage erected especially for the performance.

At first the *mimes* were brought out as independent performances, but after the more serious forms of drama had gained public attention these comic skits were relegated to the position of after-pieces (*exodia*). During the Imperial Period, however, they appealed so powerfully to the general favor that once more they passed from the humble position of after-pieces to their original status of independent productions. The *mimes* were performed by a principal actor, who served at the same time as the director of the company; he was supported by a second actor who was so thoroughly subordinate that he might even be subjected to a beating if his chief was displeased with his performance; another secondary rôle was that of the dolt,—the *stupidus*.

In the Roman eye the crowning infamy of the *mimes* was the presence of women as actresses; this outraged the Roman sense of decorum. Nor was the personal reputation of these women at all calculated to win the respect of the fastidious Romans; their known looseness of private life coupled with their shameless abandon on the stage gave to them for all time the stigma of infamy, and it furnished to the early church a powerful argument against a theater which tolerated such performances.

The writers of *mimes* seem to have regularly chosen coarse and indecent themes. The nature of the topics may be euphemistically stated in the words of Donatus (a commentator on Virgil's *Aeneid*): "*Mimi solis inhonestis et adulteris placent.*" By their choice of low subjects the *mimi* not only reflected the flagrant immorality of their period, but by their shameless stage performances they helped, in turn, to spread the contagion.

When we speak of Roman tragedy we usually think only of Seneca; but Seneca was by no means the only tragic writer at Rome, though his fellow tragedians are represented today only by their names and a few fragmentary lines. We might infer that the records of the Eternal City, rich in its hallowed stories of Romulus and Remus, the Horatii, and the Sabine Women, would furnish material eminently suitable for a national tragedy. Had conditions been favorable such a drama might have arisen and come down to us side by side with the splendid tragedies of the Greeks. Only two things were necessary,—the themes and the men; the themes were at hand; the poets were lacking,—partly because Rome was deeply engrossed in her death grapple with Carthage, partly because the few living tragic writers turned to Greek themes, and, in part, because there was no general public taste for regular tragic drama. Accordingly we find Livius Andronicus producing, in 240 B. C., a tragedy, not on a national Roman theme, but a translation or adaptation from a Greek original. The successors of Livius,—Naevius, Ennius, Pacuvius, Accius, improved steadily upon their model and turned out works of increasing originality; their themes were not gods, not mythological characters, but subjects which were regarded as strictly historical; thus Naevius took as his subject, Romulus; Ennius, the Sabine Women; Pacuvius, Paullus; Accius, Brutus. Of later tragic writers we need mention only Seneca, who is discussed in another chapter. We find references to thirty-six tragic writers and about one hundred and fifty plays at the outside; of these only the ten attributed to Seneca have come down to us.

The form of tragedy known as *fabula praetexta* resembles the *comoedia togata* in confining its attention to themes of national character. As the ancient critic Donatus puts it, "*Tragoedia, si Latina argumentatio sit, praetexta dicitur.*" This form of tragedy derives its name from the *toga praetexta* worn by high officials. In general the *praetexta* (or *praetextata* as it was generally designated by the later grammarians) conformed in structure to its Greek models. Teuffel thinks it not improbable that the writers of *praetextae* incorporated in their plays selec-

tions from Greek tragedies; we know, too, that the writers of the supposedly genuine Roman *togatae* were not above appropriating from the New Attic Greek Comedy such material as suited their purpose.

One hold, at least, Roman tragedy had upon the Roman populace; it gratified their taste for pomp, movement, and spectacle. The Romans demanded a crowded stage and they craved tumultuous action; the producer who hoped to compete with the gladiatorial combats of the arena was obliged to furnish everything within his resources in the way of spectacular counter-attractions.

Chapter XIX

PLAUTUS

It is attested by both Festus and Jerome that the birthplace of Plautus was Sarsina, a town in Umbria. Scholars are not agreed on the extent to which Sarsina had become subject to Roman domination at the time of the birth of Plautus in 254 B.C. We know that only twelve years before his birth (266 B.C.), Sarsina was still resisting the Romans, a forlorn and hopeless struggle because all the other Italian cities of Italy had succumbed to the Roman legions. Teuffel thinks that at the time of Plautus' birth the city had not yet become Latinized.

We may fix the year of his birth at approximately 254 B. C. Many writers place it definitely in that year; some of the more conservative scholars consider 254 B. C. as merely an approximate date. All depends upon the interpretation of a statement by Cicero that Plautus was an "old man" when he wrote his *Truculentus* and his *Pseudolus*. The *Pseudolus* was produced in 191 B.C.; if we call a man of sixty "old," the year of his birth would be 251 B. C.; if for good measure we add sixty-three to 191 B. C. we get the year 254. Conservative scholars assign accordingly the years 254–251 B. C. as the period within which his birth falls.

When we attempt to ascertain the year of his death we are on much firmer ground. Cicero in his *Brutus* gives us explicit data: "*Plautus P. Claudio L. Porcio coss. mortuus est, Catone censore.*" ("Plautus died during the consulship of Publius Claudius and Lucius Porcius, during the censorship of Cato"). This gives us 184 B. C. as the exact year of the death of Plautus. Aulus Gellius gives on the authority of the scholarly Varro an epitaph which, Gellius thinks, was written by Plautus himself.

If Plautus really wrote this epitaph, he was not suffering from an inferiority complex:—

"Postquam est mortem aptus Plautus, Comoedia luget,
Scaena est deserta, ac dein Risus, Ludus Jocusque
Et numeri innumeri simul omnes conlacrumarunt".

(When Plautus died comedy grieved,
The stage was empty, and forthwith Laughter, Sportiveness and Jesting
And metrical measures numberless wept in concert).

In calling him Titus Maccius Plautus we are following the tradition which is generally accepted today and was but rarely questioned in ancient times. We find in Festus the only evidence for the form *Accius* instead of *Maccius*. (Festus must have had our poet in mind because he names the birthplace as Sarsina: "*poeta Accius, quia umber Sarsinas.*") We can readily see how easy it would be to confuse in the manuscript the readings, *M. Accius* and *Maccius*. The biographer of Plautus in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* suggests that the original form of Maccius may have been Maccus. The word Plautus (in the Umbrian spelling *Plotus*) meant "flat-footed."

Following the urge which in those days as well as in modern times leads country boys to the great cities to seek their fortunes, the youthful Plautus left his native town in Umbria and came to the Eternal City. He was fortunate enough to secure a position; it had to do with the theater,—stage carpentering it is usually said (*in operis artificum scaenicorum,* as Aulus Gellius puts it). In view of the pittance paid to carpenters and other mechanics in those days we are puzzled over the recorded statement that he made and saved money enough to engage in business,—apparently a foreign speculation of some sort. Whatever the business, it seems clear that the stage carpenter was not a good business man; he lost his money and had to go back to hard work. The carpenter's bench was no longer available and according to modern writers he had to work for hire in a treadmill. Not an improbable story. The writer in the *Encyclopædia*

Britannica puts it somewhat differently: "After earning some money and losing it again he took to writing plays." That phrase "took to writing plays" suggests the lament which John L. Sullivan the famous fistic artist made to Theodore Roosevelt as Mr. Walter Damrosch told it over the radio. It seems that Mr. Sullivan had a nephew whom he was anxious to bring up in the right way. He told his tale of woe to Mr. Roosevelt: "I did everything for that boy; I dressed him well, I sent him to college, I did my best to make a man of him; but his tastes were low and he took to music."

In the period of Plautus theatrical conditions were very primitive. A wooden platform served as a stage. This platform-stage had a background which was called the *scaena;* the platform itself was named the *proscaenium* or *pulpitum;* the place where the spectators stood or sat was known as the *cavea;* the level space between the stage and the main body of the audience was known as the *orchestra.* Note the change that had occurred in the use to which this level space called the *orchestra* was put. In the Greek theater the orchestra was devoted exclusively to the chorus and its stately movements; in the Roman theater the chorus had become negligible and the space formerly occupied by the dancers was, in the days of Plautus, assigned to the senators and other dignitaries. Here we have the beginning of the system of reserved "orchestra seats" which is still in vogue in modern theaters.

The Roman officials cared but little for the theater; the audiences seem to have cared even less. The crowd was largely made up of foreigners and freedmen, the rabble of the populace; many of them scarcely understood the spoken Latin. Admission was free to those who cared to come; the city officials and the ambitious candidates for political office courted the favor of the common people; the flower of the Roman youth was usually far away from Rome in the interminable wars. Such a motley assembly, accepting free admission, but feeling a half-concealed contempt for the offer of "something for nothing" was not calculated to inspire a dramatist to do his best. Those who put their very best efforts into their work

might well have questioned whether it paid to "tickle the ears of the groundlings." Terence tried it and failed in his day, yet posterity has crowned him with the bays. Plautus understood the crowd and catered to its tastes; he stood in much closer contact with the "mechanicals" than did the elegant and exclusive Terence. (How strange it seems to apply the terms "elegant" and "exclusive" to a slave in patrician Rome.) But even Plautus as we see from his prologues had his troubles with the noisy inattentive and unappreciative crowd.

Plautus makes no attempt to conceal his practice of borrowing from the Greeks. It is amusing to note his epithet "barbarus" applied to Roman manners and customs,—the very term which the Greeks from whom he borrowed were in the habit of applying to all nations outside of their own borders. It must have jarred his Roman audience to hear themselves called "barbarians" by the nation for whom they habitually expressed only the most withering contempt; (*Graeculus esuriens in caelum, jusseris, ibit,* sums up in proverbial form the Roman estimate of the Greek).

He devises Latinized forms of Greek words; he uses compounds which would be intelligible only to those who knew that language; his plays abound in references to Greek cities, harbors and coinage; although the titles of his plays are mostly Latin (*Captivi, Rudens, Miles Gloriosus*), the names of the characters (Philocrates, Pyrgopolinices, Palaestra), their dress and their manners are distinctly Greek rather than Roman.

We can, in many cases, trace to their specific Greek sources his Roman adaptations, even though the original has perished. His *Rudens* and his *Casina* were taken from plays by Diphilus; his *Mercator* and *Trinummus* from Philemon; the *Asinaria* from Demophilus; the *Bacchides* probably from Menander.

In reading side by side the plays of Plautus and Terence the two contrasting epithets which spring to our lips are Plautus, the virile, Terence, the elegant. Neither attains the clear-cut personification of Shakespeare's characters, but the men of Plautus surpass in sharpness of individuality those of Terence. In Plautus we miss the subtler insight of Terence,

yet in compensation we find a careless lusty vigor that carries us back to the very streets and market-places of ancient Rome.

Critics seem agreed that the majority of the plays of Plautus date from his later period and mostly from the last twenty years of his life. The knowledge of both Greek and Latin which he shows in his comedies, and the unpropitious conditions of his early life, warrant us in assuming that he spent many years of hard work in acquiring this mastery.

The student of ancient Roman life must handle the plays of Plautus with great care. Basing his comedies upon Greek originals he has introduced so large an element of Roman life that his plays do not perfectly reflect either Greek or Roman conditions. The comedies of Aristophanes are so faithful a mirror of the Athenian customs of his day that they are used by college students as an authoritative textbook of the daily life of the Athenians of the latter part of the fifth century B. C. The reader of Plautus faces a much more complicated problem; it requires the finest critical acumen and a thorough knowledge of both Athenian and Roman manners to separate the two elements in a Plautine comedy, and to assign the individual data to the appropriate category,—Greek or Roman. Plautus is far more than a mere translator; starting with a Greek original he ends with something that is undeniably Roman in spirit and in many of the details yet with a pronounced residuum of the original Greek. We find, for example, a strange admixture of refinement and of animal coarseness. The elegance may usually be attributed to the Greek writers whose works he makes the basis of his own plays; the vulgarity may have its origin in part, at least, in the old Atellan farce which found its way to Rome at about the time when Plautus began his dramatic work; then, too, the spirit of revelry attendant upon the Roman festivals laid hold of Plautus, and led him into the looseness and crudity which disfigure some of his plays. But, with the example of Aristophanes before our eyes we need not wonder that the lusty Roman writers did precisely what the incomparable Athenian wit did under practically identical circumstances.

We find in the plays of Plautus a strange mixture of Greek thought and philosophy, Roman proverbs, magistrates, games, habits and customs, even references to recent events in Roman history. Such a combination must have produced a curious impression upon his audience. The scholars among them, if any there were, might understand the Greek allusions, but these references would be unintelligible to the rank and file; yet there was a sufficiently liberal portion of genuine Roman life in his plays to hold the attention of the groundlings could they be coaxed into listening. It was probably because of the absence of the Roman element in the plays of Terence that he failed with the general public and found his real admirers among the cultivated literary circles of the capital.

Plautus anticipated Terence in the process of combining two Greek comic originals into a single Latin comedy. His *Miles Gloriosus* and his *Poenulus* are both compounds of two original Greek plays.

Critics frequently select from the entire group of extant plays of Plautus the following five:—*Aulularia*, *Captivi*, *Menaechmi*, *Pseudolus*, *Rudens*. Some scholars would substitute the *Bacchides* for the *Rudens*. Others, the *Amphitruo* for the *Pseudolus*.

The *Aulularia* is the portrait of a miser. The *Captivi* is the story of the heroic self-sacrifice of a slave. It is unique in having no female characters; it is notable also for its rôle of a parasite. The *Menaechmi* treats of the complications arising from the great resemblance of twin brothers; Shakespeare utilized the plot in *The Comedy of Errors*. The *Pseudolus* is a comedy of intrigue with a slave rôle; the *Rudens*, a combination of the sentimental, the jovial, and the witty. The *Bacchides* is one of the best of the plays of Plautus, in skillful handling of the complications, the characterization and the unity of tone. The *Amphitruo* is the only Plautine play with a mythological theme.

Cicero and Horace differ widely in their estimate of Plautus. Cicero elevates him to the level of his Attic exemplars; he praises his elegant wit, his genius, his urbane manners

(*iocandi genus elegans, urbanum, ingeniosum, facetum*); Horace scores him for his carelessness of composition, his eagerness to make money regardless of the quality of his work: *Gestit enim nummum in loculos demittere, post hoc securus, cadat an recte stet fabula talo.*

Modern critics find in his plays contradictions, illogical situations, improbabilities; some of these critical defects may be the result of his habit of combining two Greek originals into a single Roman play; some are doubtless due to the alterations and rewritings to which his manuscripts were subjected after his death; some may even be traced back to the originals themselves. To combine two originals into a single plot calls for a high degree of constructive skill; a French Scribe or a Norwegian Ibsen might have accomplished the task, but the strength of Plautus lay in his wit, his humor, his wide outlook on life, his keen observation, his ingenious handling of details rather than in architectural plotting. But despite his undoubted weaknesses he was a genius in adapting Greek originals to the Roman stage. So far as the diction is concerned the reader never feels that he is reading a mere translation.

In these days of emancipated womanhood we are shocked by the unflattering sentiments which Plautus utters at the expense of women, but we must not single him out for censure; the attitude which he assumes was prevalent through antiquity as far back at least as the days of the Athenian Pericles. The Greek comic writer Aristophanes never wearies of lampooning the sex; the prejudice continued down the ages to the time of the younger Attic dramatists from whom Plautus borrowed.

The reader of Plautus must brace himself against the coarseness and deliberate obscenity which occasionally disfigure his pages. Here again we should not hold him up as the sole or chief offender; several of the plays of his predecessor Aristophanes are as a whole unfit for reproduction on a modern stage. Indecency was not confined to the Roman stage; the Greeks were accustomed to it; the Elizabethans listened to it in their theaters; Restoration audiences smiled at it under-

standingly; the modern comic stage carries on the unsavory tradition.

Plautus excels in the vividness of his character drawing; some of his personages have stood ever since their creation as types of certain phases of humanity. The Euclio of the *Aularia* served Molière as the model of his miser. This skill in characterization is displayed most conspicuously in his portraits of the lower classes of Roman society,—slaves, parasites, common soldiers and similar types.

Until recent times scholars regarded the Latin of Plautus as a priceless source of information regarding the colloquial speech of the humbler class of Roman citizens. Teuffel in his standard *History of Roman Literature* says that Plautus "employs the every-day speech of his period, a speech which had not yet become established by literary tradition." Professor Ashmore of Union College asserts that Plautus "did much to improve the Latin language, which underwent, at his hands, a process of cultivation and enlargement that carried it far on its way toward its subsequent classical perfection." The new point of view finds a spokesman in the article on Plautus in the recent edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica:* "It is a mistake to regard the Latin of Plautus as 'vulgar.' It is essentially a literary idiom, based upon the language of intercourse of the Roman society of the day."

A complete list of the plays in modern languages which show the direct or the indirect influence of Plautus would contain many titles known only to the special student. Those who desire a detailed list will find it readily accessible in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica.* We cite here only a few of the modern plays which are familiar to all readers. In France, Corneille used as his models in creating modern French comedy in verse both Plautus and Terence. Molière's *L'Amphitryon* (1668) was an imitation of the *Amphitruo* of Plautus; in his *L'Avare,* he borrowed certain scenes from the *Aulularia* of the same author. In English literature Nicholas Udall's *Ralph Roister Doister,* the first complete English comedy intended for public performance, first printed in 1566, is founded on the *Miles*

Gloriosus of Plautus. Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* (1591) is an adaptation of the *Menaechmi* of Plautus. Attention has been called to Shakespeare's *Falstaff* as an Elizabethan adaptation of the braggart soldier of Plautus and Terence, familiar to readers of the *Miles Gloriosus* of Plautus; this Latin original reappears also in the Parolles of Shakespeare, and the Captain Bobadil of Ben Jonson. The influence of the *Mostellaria* of Plautus may be seen in the Shakespearean Gremio and Tranio of *The Taming of the Shrew*, reminiscent of the Tranio and Grumio of the Plautine play. Ben Jonson's *The Case is Altered* (written before 1599) is a modern example of *contaminatio*,—an amalgamation of the *Aulularia* and the *Captivi* of Plautus. Thomas Heywood's *Silver Age* (1613) based on the *Amphitruo*, his *Captives* (1624) on the *Rudens* and his *English Traveller* (1633) on the *Mostellaria* are three additional examples of Plautine influence. Dryden's *Amphitryon* (1690), is based partly on Plautus's *Amphitruo*, partly on Molière's adaptation of the same play.

A generation or two ago the meters of Plautus were the despair of scholars. It seemed impossible to discover any regular metrical system underlying the lines. Older college men still recall the desperate efforts they made in the class-room to "scan" a line of Plautus even when they were told by the professor the name of the meter of that particular line. The new scholarship has changed all that; much of the difficulty was caused by faulty manuscript readings; these have in large part been corrected by accurate emendation. Some recent Latin scholars regard Plautus as a master of prosody. One striking innovation deserves mention. Owing to the decline of the Greek chorus in the time of Menander the plays from which Plautus derived his material were largely confined to the ordinary meter of dialogue,—the iambic trimeter. Plautus took metrical liberties with his borrowed material; in place of the lines spoken in iambic trimeter in the Greek plays he introduced extensive passages to be sung to the accompaniment of the flute (*cantica*) and inserted other important groups which were to be intoned or chanted in recitation. But we must not

think of these sung and chanted passages as mere inserts which could be omitted without injury to the development of the theme; they are essential parts of the play. The novelty lies not so much in the particular meters which he employed in the *cantica* and the *recitative* portions (these meters are found in Greek drama as well as in the comedies of other Roman dramatists), but in the fact that they are a new metrical method of handling passages which in the Greek originals would have been uniformly cast into the orthodox iambic trimeter.

Plautus was practically unknown in the middle ages. Even Hroswitha, the tenth century nun of Gandersheim who imitated the comedies of Terence, seems to have been unacquainted with Plautus. As late as the fifteenth century only eight of the comedies of Plautus were known; (*Amphitruo* to *Epidicus* in alphabetical order); these eight, however, were preserved in a considerable number of manuscripts. In 1429 A. D. a remarkable literary discovery was made. Nicholas Treves came upon one which contained the twelve long-lost plays of Plautus; it contained also three plays which had previously been known (*Amphitruo*, *Asinaria*, *Aulularia*), and the first half of a fourth play the *Captivi*. This priceless twelfth century manuscript, discovered in Germany, came into the hands of Cardinal Orsini in Rome in 1429, and is now in the Vatican library. After the Revival of Learning, Plautus recovered from the neglect into which he had fallen, and acquired the position of one of the leading dramatists of the ancient classical period.

The plays of Plautus fall under the head of *palliata*, so called because the scene was laid in Greece and the actors wore the Greek garment known in Latin as the *pallium*. In ancient times as many as one hundred and thirty plays were attributed to Plautus, many of these undoubtedly with no authority; it became the custom to attribute to him all comedies of the *fabulae palliatae* class of this period whose authors were not definitely known. The motive of this wholesale crediting of *palliatae* to Plautus was sometimes innocent, sometimes crafty; the celebrated name became a convenient label under which to group all unnamed *palliatae;* at the same time shrewd theater man-

agers sought to win popularity for inferior or anonymous plays by boldly announcing them as the work of the great master.

As early as the days of the grammarian Varro, "the most learned of the Romans," born 117 B. C., very serious doubts were cast on the genuineness of many of the plays in the list of one hundred and thirty attributed to Plautus. Varro grouped these under three classes:—

1. Twenty-one universally recognized as genuine.
2. Those which were probably genuine.
3. Those which were not by Plautus.

Those under the first group are generally known as *Fabulae Varronianae*. The term is somewhat misleading because it is often regarded as an endorsement by Varro of the genuineness of the twenty-one plays which he puts under this category. Varro simply claimed that his list included all those which were by general consent regarded as genuine (*consensu omnium Plauti esse censebantur.*) Under the second class Varro placed certain plays which though in some cases bearing the name of other writers seemed to him to conform in structure and in diction to the style of Plautus. The confusion seems to have arisen in part from the existence of another poet of a nearly similar name, Plautius, whose comedies were confused with those of Plautus. The outcome of the critical investigation of Varro and others was that of the entire list of one hundred and thirty plays only nineteen in addition to the twenty-one *Fabulae Varronianae*, a total of forty, were regarded as having any claim whatever to genuineness. The remaining ninety were branded as spurious. It is a remarkable fact that exactly twenty-one plays (including the fragmentary *Vidularia*) have come down to us; the inference that these are the twenty-one comedies which were sifted out by Varro and placed in the first list seems so inevitable that it is generally accepted by modern scholars.

Was Plautus a power for good or did he debase his auditors? So far as literary tastes are concerned we need not hesitate long in deciding in his favor. In his day books were expensive luxuries and the study of literature was confined to

the cultivated few. The audiences to whom he catered were rude and unpolished; it meant much to these unlettered listeners to bring them into contact with the polished writers of Attic Greece even at second hand. There is room for greater divergence of opinion when we consider his moral influence upon his listeners. Some modern critics unequivocally condemn him: "he depicts the morally degenerate society of later Athens; his characters are actuated by the lowest motives, they usually gain their ends by fraud and shameless deceit." This is the indictment of the prosecution; the defenders of Plautus do not venture to picture their client as an ethical pattern, but they say that though he had to cater to the low tastes of his rough audience, he was capable of finer things, and he really made earnest efforts to improve the public character as well as the public taste. Their final plea as expressed by one of his apologists is: "Though he did little to elevate the morals of his hearers, his influence, on the whole, was good."

The plays of Plautus retained their popularity for some time after his death. It was probably this posthumous popularity which led to the writing of new prologues, or in some cases to the rewriting of the old for late Plautine productions. It is a curious fact that Volcatius Sedigitus, a critic who lived about the beginning of the first century B. C. in a catalogue of writers of *fabulae palliatae*, attempted to rank them in order of merit; he awards the first place to Caecilius, the second to Plautus, but he assigns Terence to as low a place as sixth in the list of ten. This very low estimate of Terence has caused much surprise among modern critics; either the judgment of Sedigitus was faulty or he had at his disposal critical material which has utterly disappeared. The prologues of Plautus have been subjected to close examination and are still the cause of critical disputes. Some of them, notably that of the *Captives*, serve as exposition, as a means of informing the audience of the dramatic situation which the play will handle. The speaker of the prologue of the *Captives* takes infinite pains to make the complicated situation clear to the audience. He points to the characters on the stage and identifies them by name: *Illic voca-*

tur Philocrates, hic Tyndarus. He stops from time to time to make certain that the audience is following his explanation: *iam hoc tenetis? optumumst.* There is a dispute regarding the origin of these prologues. Are they by Plautus himself? Teuffel positively attributes them to the original Greek plays but he thinks that Plautus amplified them by inserting jokes and detailed explanation, necessitated by the lack of culture among his auditors. He rejects the theory of post-Plautine composition, but he admits that the prologues were in part re-written for productions after the death of Plautus. The writer in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says that though the bulk of them may be of Greek origin, certain passages must have been added by Plautus, and still others were inserted after his death. Professor Harold North Fowler, a thorough scholar, says unqualifiedly: "The extant prologues are not those written by Plautus, but belong to the period (the second half of the second century B. C.) when, after the transient brilliancy of the time of Terence, the lack of new pieces compelled the people to return to their old favorite Plautus." Some of the arguments which Fowler adduces in support of the post-Plautine date of the prologues are: references to theatrical arrangements which were not introduced until after his death; one of the prologues expressly states that it was not written by Plautus himself, and it refers to his plays as *veteres fabulae;* their literary quality as a whole is below the standard of Plautus.

That Shakespeare was acquainted with Plautus is clear from a reference in *Hamlet,* where Polonius says: "The best actors in the world . . . Seneca cannot be too heavy nor Plautus too light." *The Comedy of Errors* is based directly or indirectly upon the *Menaechmi* of Plautus; it is not absolutely certain, though it is very probable, that Shakespeare went back directly to the Latin of Plautus for his original. Sidney Lee and Ashley Thorndike agree that Shakespeare had studied Plautus in the Stratford grammar school. On the other hand, it is possible that he did not go back to the original Latin; he may have taken as the basis of his *The Comedy of Errors* a play now lost, *The Historie of Error,* which was acted about

fifteen years before he wrote his own play. It is also barely possible that he had access to an English manuscript translation of the *Menaechmi* which was privately circulated by the translator among his intimate friends before he issued it in printed form. The printed translation (1595) was undoubtedly subsequent to the composition of *The Comedy of Errors*. Shakespeare may have been one of the private friends of the "W.W." who were privileged to read the translation in its manuscript form. This was the first printed translation of the *Menaechmi*. Whether or not Shakespeare consulted a translation, the essential fact is that Plautus was sufficiently known to a dramatist of the sixteenth century to form the basis of an Elizabethan play.

Of the English translations we mention but two, both of which are modern and easily obtainable. In verse: those by Wright and Rogers, in *Broadway Translations*, 1923. In prose: by P. Nixon, Loeb Series, 1916-24.

Chapter XX

TERENCE

The life of Terence was short, the material facts about him are scanty, yet they are perhaps sufficient to give us an insight into his personality. For the data we are largely indebted to Donatus, a commentator and grammarian of the fourth century of the Christian era. From the prologues of the plays of Terence we derive valuable information. Additional light is thrown upon his life by authoritative references in later Latin authors.

It is, at first sight, an astonishing phenomenon that a boy born a slave in Carthage, Africa, of an unknown father and mother, of a race which the haughty Romans despised, should have worked his way up into the most elegant and exclusive literary circle that patrician Rome ever boasted. How did he accomplish this almost incredible feat? A partial clue has been found by some modern writers in the name of this youth,—Publius Terentius Afer. Probably not one of these three names was given him by his parents. We can attribute the "Terentius" to the name of the Roman Senator Marcus Terentius Lucanus who bought him in Rome (perhaps of a slave-dealer), educated him like a freeman, and afterwards manumitted him. The praenomen "Publius" may have been given him by his senatorial patron, or it may have been conferred upon him by his later protector and friend, Publius Scipio Africanus, the Younger. The cognomen "Afer" indicates his racial origin as a non-Roman and as not even a Carthaginian. We are certain that he was not a Carthaginian because they were differentiated by ancient authors from the Africans. (Livy, for example, speaks of *Carthaginienses Afrosque*), and it was the custom to give to a slave a name indicating his origin.

We accordingly find this Carthage-born slave equipped with three names, two of which were of distinguished connotation and the third showing that he was an African by birth,—Publius Terentius Afer. Plebeian as the name "Afer" must have sounded to the aristocratic Romans, it is thought by some that it was this very name which attracted the attention of Publius Scipio Africanus the Younger, inheritor of the proud ancestral name Africanus, from the exploits of his father in the Punic War.

How did he succeed in entering the exclusive circle made up of Scipio Africanus the Younger, Caius Laelius, Furius Philo,—youths of about his own age, and older men of distinction, perhaps, outside of the younger set,—Sulpicius Gallus, Quintus Fabius Labeo, and Marcus Popillius? Suetonius finds the clue in the personal charm of Terence: "Cum multis nobilibus familiariter vixit, sed maxime cum Scipione Africano et C. Laelio, quibus etiam corporis gratia conciliatus existimatur."

The youth of Terence coincides with a crisis in the history of Roman literature. A significant cleavage had begun to appear between the élite and the proletariat elements of the state; the common people had already begun to manifest the low taste for cruder entertainments for which later they were notorious. No longer did literary drama make any marked appeal; the populace preferred the circus, a gladiatorial combat, or even a tight-rope performance to a play of Plautus or Terence. At the other social extreme was a group of fastidious purists, making every effort to refine and elevate their native Latin tongue, and finding in the elegance of the Greek writers a model which they deliberately followed. They were actuated by genuine patriotism; they did not seek to supplant Latin, they simply wished to impart to their own language the qualities which they admired in Greek writers. A sincere effort, no doubt, but, nevertheless, essentially mischievous and potentially harmful. The history of literature shows again and again the danger of injecting an exotic tincture into a nascent literature. Roman letters had given promise of a vigorous and purely native

growth up to the time when Livius Andronicus in 240 B.C. gave the Romans their first taste of Greek drama. From that time we note an ever-increasing Attic element in Roman drama. Plautus with his vigorous and lively native Roman spirit, retains even in his adaptations marked traces of the domestic life of the Roman proletariat; in Terence the surrender to Greek is absolute if not abject. The scholar still reads Plautus in the expectation of finding valuable indications of the everyday life of the Roman citizen; we read Terence for his urbanity, his culture, and his preservation for us in title and plots of the lost works of Menander of Athens and Apollodorus of Carystus. When, with all the material before us, we survey the inroads of Greece upon the native Roman genius, we find ourselves in accord with the critical historians who are forced to admit that the only genuine original contribution which Rome made to the world's literature was in the form of satire.

We must not forget that there was a good side to the efforts of the Scipionic coterie to purge Latin of its impurities. The language was still in a formative state with no recognized linguistic standards to which a writer could conform even had he wished to do so. The Scipionic group paid great attention to the purification and betterment of their native tongue. Terence, in all probability, was in the habit of reading first drafts of his plays to this critical and fastidious group, and as a result of their criticism, the six plays of Terence became the standard of elegant diction. Many centuries later a movement strikingly similar to the Scipionic group was that of the circle of the Marquise de Rambouillet under Louis XIII in France. Here again we find the phenomenon of a crude and rather coarse speech remodeled and made elegant by the efforts of a group of cultivated purists.

By the time our young poet had written six plays patterned after Greek originals, he began to feel the urge to visit the native land of his models,—Menander and Apollodorus. His impulse was shared by many young Romans of his own and later days. In the Elizabethan period young men did not regard their education as complete until they had studied in Italy. It

was not so long ago that American classical students did not consider their own academic training finished until they had spent a year or two in German universities, and had traveled in Italy and Greece. In 160 B.C. the young Terence, not much over twenty-five, started on his long anticipated trip. From this journey he never returned; when he died and where, we can not determine from the conflicting data; one account says he died of fever at a village in Arcadia; another that he was lost at sea off the island of Lucas. At any rate his untimely death resulted in the loss of a number of translations which he had made from originals of Menander. The six comedies measure therefore his surviving work.

The rapid rise of Terence in social and literary fame was not an unmixed boon. If his charming personality and his undoubted poetic gifts brought him a group of ardent and influential admirers both before and after his death, it raised up also a group of jealous detractors who venomously attacked him at every vulnerable point. And, first, regarding his friends outside of the Scipionic circle; there are some mighty names among them: Cicero quotes him and finds in his plays passages which apply to his own circumstances in life; Julius Caesar called him a "Semi-Menander" (*dimidiatus Menander*) and praises him for the purity of his diction (*puri sermonis amator*); Quintilian calls him "the supremely elegant" (*elegantissimus*). His enemies do not muster in their ranks any one of the caliber of Cicero, Caesar and Quintilian, but what they lacked in commanding names they made up in bitterness and vehemence.

It seems quite clear that his fellow-poets as a whole resented his alleged assumption of superiority arising from his connection with aristocratic patrons, nor can we fairly ignore the somewhat lofty superciliousness which crops out again and again in his prologues. He seems to have a profound contempt for all whose taste differs from his own. Speaking of his own diction in one of his prologues he says: *In hac est pura oratio.* That sentence really tells the whole story: "I am a pattern of purity of style. *Abi in malam rem* all ye who fall short of my

standard." He seems to have never joined the guild of Roman poets. He found his intimates exclusively among the aristocracy. The men whom he ignored could not forget that they were snubbed by a social parvenu, a foreign-born slave, and they vented their spite in criticisms and invectives. Even Julius Caesar, while praising Terence for the purity of his diction, notes in him a lack of comic vigor (*vis comica*). Several other writers,—grammarians and antiquarians, who lived within a generation or two after Terence, are distinctly hostile both to him and his patrons. In this linking of Terence with his protectors as an object of attack we may detect the jealous animus of his enemies.

The two charges most frequently made against him were what was known as: *contaminatio* and *furtum*. When Terence did resort to *contaminatio* (and he did not deny the charge) it was due to the fact that the original Greek comedies were so lacking in action that he was compelled to select and combine the vigorous portions of two plays to provide action enough to satisfy the robust Roman audience. In several of his prologues Terence replies to the attacks of one of his opponents "a malevolent old poet" (*malivolus vetus poeta*) who had accused him of *contaminatio*. In his own defense he cites the examples of his predecessors Naevius, Plautus and Ennius.

The other charge against him was theft (*furtum*). This charge gives us an insight into the peculiar ethics of the literary world of Terence's day. It was not *furtum* to translate a Greek play into Latin. But once translated into that language, no other Latin poet could make a new version of the Greek original without committing "theft." The first translation blocked for all time the privilege of further borrowing. To this charge Terence files a flat denial; taking up the specific cases in which he was alleged to have committed *furtum* he either proves that his translation was the first made into Latin by any author or he pleads ignorance that another had preceded his.

Still another charge lodged against him was that the plays bearing his name were not his own productions, but were the work of his aristocratic friends. Cicero speaks of a prevalent

belief that Laelius had written the plays. (*Cuius fabellae propter elegantiam sermonis putabantur a C. Laelio scribi*). Quintilian mentions the current opinion which attributed them to Scipio Africanus. It is significant that Terence neither affirmed nor denied this accusation. Most modern critics admit a certain degree of validity in the charge; they believe that Terence submitted to his friends the first draft of his plays, listened to their criticisms, and embodied the suggestions in his completed draft. Some such theory is needed to explain the consummate literary finish of a foreign-born slave, who when he brought out his last play was but twenty-six years of age.

Mingled with the arrogance, as his enemies considered it, of his attitude toward his poetic colleagues, Sellar in his *Roman Poets of the Republic* finds in the prologues of Terence an apologetic tone. Whether or not the note is there Sellar is justified in calling attention to the close parallel between the freedman Terence and the freedman's son Horace, born one hundred and twenty years later. Both were poets, they studied in Greece, each reached high social position, they had to face the taunts and sneers of jealous competitors. But Horace was a more vigorous fighter than Terence; he defiantly flung back into their own faces the *pus atque venenum* of his detractors. A study of the *Satires* of Horace as compared with the prologues of Terence will reveal the difference of personality of the two great Roman poets.

There has come down to us a pretty story regarding the first appearance of Terence as a literary man. He had finished his first play, the *Andria*, and had submitted it to the Roman Aediles with the hope that they would produce it at the *Ludi Megalenses* (*Megalensia* or *Megalesia*) in April. The youth of nineteen was utterly unknown as a poet, and the *Ludi Megalenses* were public events of great importance. "Better submit the play to Caecilius and let him pronounce judgment" was the advice of the doubtful Aediles. A poorly-clad youth accordingly called at the house of the literary arbiter Caecilius, who, since the death of Plautus, had ranked among the first of the comic poets at Rome. The great critic was at dinner. Enter

the poor young man with his manuscript. Caecilius curtly nodded to Terence to take a seat on a stool at the foot of the couch. He bade Terence begin the reading. Before he had read many lines the old poet was all attention; he bade Terence to "come up higher" and share the delicacies of the table. A pretty story, reminding us of the young Rostand who so captivated the reluctantly listening Coquelin, that he made the extraordinary promise to accept, without reading, the manuscript of any play that Rostand might write in the future provided it contained a rôle for Coquelin. Thus originated the famous *Cyrano de Bergerac* of Rostand. The Rostand story is accepted as historical. It is a pity that the critics are sceptical about the Caecilius anecdote. Sellar demolishes the tale by the stubborn chronological fact that Caecilius died in 168, two years before the supposed reading. To save the story we must evidently change one or both of the dates.

Terence, like Shakespeare, is preëminently quotable. An ingenious compiler might, without much trouble, arrange a Terence calendar similar to the Shakespeare annual which presents an apt quotation for every day in the year. Many citations from Terence have become a literary commonplace used by writers who could not name the author of the quotation. Perhaps the most famous is: "*Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto*" (*I am human; therefore there is nothing human in which I am not interested.*) Another, almost as famous, is: "*Amantium irae amoris integratiost*" (*The quarrels of lovers are a renewal of their love*).

Here are a few more, notably terse:

"*Ne quid nimis*" (*nothing in excess*) The Latin equivalent of a famous Greek proverb.

"*Hinc illae lacrimae*" (*Thence these tears*)

"*Quot homines, tot sententiae*" (*So many men, so many opinions*)

"*Tacent; satis laudant*" (*Their silence is sufficient praise*)

"*Nullumst iam dictum quod non dictum sit prius*" (*There can be said nothing which has not previously been said*)

"*Nosse omnia haec salus est adulescentibus*" (*The safety of the young lies in ignorance of all these things*)

To trace in full the influence of Terence upon later writers would be equivalent to writing a substantial dissertation. We can mention only a few salient names in the lengthy list. Horace had evidently made a careful study of the diction and the sentiments of Terence. The parallels are too numerous and the resemblance too close to admit of any other interpretation. The original of some of the most striking expressions in Horace is to be found in Terence's own plays. The diction of Horace's satires, of his epistles, even of his polished odes, is strongly reminiscent of Terence. Passing down to the middle ages we find the famous nun of Gandersheim, Hroswitha, writing plays expressly modeled on those of Terence, that she might provide in classical form literary entertainment of a safer moral tone than that of the famous heathen poet. Erasmus, Melanchthon, Casaubon studied Terence until they knew him almost *verbatim*. Montaigne and Sainte-Beuve praised him supremely. Fénelon rated him higher even than the master Molière. Molière in turn was indebted to Terence for the basic material of his *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, his *École des Maris* and his *Le Mariage Forcé*. His influence on English drama and English style has been equally profound. Garrick's *The Guardian* owes much to Terence's *Adelphoe;* Steele's *Conscious Lovers* and Edward Moore's *Foundling* are indebted to the *Andria;* Charles Sedley's *Bellamira* draws on the *Eunuchus;* Micio and Demea of the *Adelphoe* served as models for the leading characters of Cumberland in his *Choleric Man* and for Shadwell in his *Squire of Alsatia.*

Nor do critics fail to acknowledge the beneficial influence of Terence upon English style. They find in Addison a grace and charm suggested by the urbanity of his model; the polished smoothness, the incomparable ease of the Latin author find their supreme exemplification in the diction of Congreve. Indeed there is a striking likeness in the careers of these two men; both finished their dramatic work in early life; both achieved perfection of style at an age when many writers are still drudging over their labored technique; Congreve ceased voluntarily to produce drama and henceforth lived securely

upon his early triumphs; Terence died while planning future conquests. We need not speculate about what greater work either poet could have done. Possibly riper years would have produced more perfect fruit, but it is also possible that we have been spared the painful spectacle of two youthful giants living long enough to see the world lamenting that their later works had dimmed the glory of their youth.

Chapter XXI

SENECA

When Polonius is describing to Hamlet the qualifications of the strolling players who have opportunely appeared at court, he says of them: "Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light" for them. Why did Polonius select Seneca rather than Sophocles or Euripides as examples of tragic excellence? The answer to this query plunges us at once into a consideration of the influence which the Roman tragic poet Seneca exerted upon the Elizabethan dramatists.

Who was this Roman who exerted the mighty influence of which we hear so much? He was a Spaniard, born in the town of Corduba (now Cordova). The exact year of his birth is not known, but it was about three or four years before the Christion era. His father, Annaeus Seneca, known as Seneca the Elder, or Seneca the Rhetorician, was, like the son, a native of Corduba; the family was well-to-do and of the Knightly (Equestrian) rank; he had received his education at Rome; only a few years before the elder Seneca's arrival as a student the poet Horace had likewise found his way to the eternal city; he has recorded in imperishable Latin his proud boast *Romae nutriri mihi contigit.* The father of Seneca spent two periods of considerable length there taking notes of the lectures of famous orators and rhetoricians in preparation for his chosen profession of advocate. His ideal orator was Cicero, but greatly to his regret he was never able to hear the great pleader in action before an audience. Of his wife we know nothing, except that her name was Helvia and that she was a lady of Corduba. We know much more about his son Lucius Annaeus Seneca of whom we shall speak in a moment. After a prolific literary career the father died about 39 A. D. leaving a number of works which have, in part, survived.

Lucius Annaeus Seneca, the Younger, to whom we shall henceforth refer simply as Seneca, was, as we have seen, born 3 or 4 B. C. in Corduba, the birthplace of his father. The father had destined his son for the bar and had given him a careful education under his own eyes at Rome. One of his teachers, Attalus, was a Stoic, and from him the boy may have imbibed the doctrines which were later so prominently displayed in his writings. Even in his youth we find marked ascetic tendencies; he became a vegetarian and a total abstainer from wine; his father, evidently not inclined personally toward similar self-denials, discouraged and checked the growing asceticism. The boy studied hard, specializing in Rhetoric and Philosophy, and early made at the bar a reputation which must have gratified his lawyer-father.

In those days, as in these, a training in the law naturally led to a public career. Political life in the Rome of Seneca's day inevitably brought a prominent man into contact, more or less intimate, with the Roman Emperors. Seneca tasted to the full the joys and sorrows of imperial favor; he was brought into personal relations with three emperors,—Gaius, Claudius, and Nero; in each case the intimacy brought misfortune. His contact with royalty finally resulted in death by suicide. The Emperor Gaius ridiculed Seneca's literary style, calling it a "mere mosaic"; he came to hate him so fiercely that he would have put him to death had he not been told that he was "so far gone with a wasting disease that he could not live long." Under Claudius he was banished to Corsica where he spent eight weary years solacing himself with study, and writing pitiful pleas for recall. His enemies,—he had and still had many, speak scornfully of the sycophantic flattery apparent in his written appeals; the exile even went so far as to write a fulsome eulogy of the infamous Messalina who was responsible for his exile. His relations with the third emperor, Nero, began pleasantly enough. The new empress, Agrippina, brought about the recall of Seneca and put him in charge of the education of her son, the eleven-year-old boy Nero. It is the old story of the "scholar in politics." Plato, four cen-

turies before, had tried it at the court of Dionysius in Syracuse; in both cases a period of royal favor ended in weariness, anger, hatred and disgrace. Aristotle tried it with the youthful crown prince, Alexander the Great; this experiment seems to have worked out better than did the Plato-Dionysius episode. We know that under Aristotle's influence Alexander acquired and retained, even during his many campaigns, a love of the poet Homer, and we read in ancient writers pretty but unconvincing stories of detachments of Alexander's men, searching in foreign lands for scientific specimens to be sent home to his old professor, Aristotle. The Seneca-Nero episode opened well; Seneca became Agrippina's confidential adviser and he acquired over the boy Nero a hold that was of undoubted moral benefit. The Imperial patronage showed itself in the advancement of the favorite; he was made Praetor, and finally in 57 A. D., after Nero had become emperor, Seneca reached the supreme honor of the consulship. The new emperor began his administration under the most brilliant prospects. Nero, Seneca, Burrus,—Emperor, Consul, Praetorian Prefect, a brilliant triumvirate. Five happy and prosperous years for the Roman state,—the Quinquennium Neronis, then the collapse. Burrus died, Nero rapidly degenerated and Seneca was without a friend. The story of Plato and Dionysius over again,—the gradual growth of a politician's instinctive dislike of the scholar who interferes in politics. Nero tired of the ethical preaching of Seneca; every moral utterance of the austere philosopher was a reproof, open or tacit, of Nero's moral disintegration. Seneca's experience with Gaius strikingly repeated itself with Nero, —an increasing dislike terminating in hatred and a determination to rid himself by death of the obnoxious monitor. Nero's avarice hastened the catastrophe. Under imperial favor Seneca had amassed an enormous fortune; aware that Nero was determined to confiscate this wealth, and realizing his imminent danger, Seneca offered to retire from public life and to hand over all his property, reserving barely enough for a modest living in retirement. Too late. Nero demanded not only the fortune but the life of his former tutor; in obedience to the

Imperial command Seneca took his own life in 65 A. D. A beautiful example of devotion was the determination of his wife, the patrician Pompeia Paulina, to die with her husband; her attempt was frustrated by force, and she survived him for several years.

What was the real character of Seneca? Was he a noble, upright man? A vain, avaricious, ostentatious sycophant? The decision reached by the investigator will depend largely upon the particular ancient authorities whom he consults. The Imperialistic writers scorn and contemn him; the admirers of the Republic exalt and eulogize him. A modern view, attempting an impartial estimate, is that of the writer in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, who says: "His manly end might be held in some measure to redeem the weakness of his life but for the testimony it bears to his constant study of effect and ostentatious self-complacency."

Of the extensive remains of his literary work we are in this study interested chiefly in the collection of translated plays which bears his name, in the edition of 1581. To those who desire to carry their investigation further we recommend various volumes of the Loeb Library which print side by side the original Latin text and accurate English translations.

We pass now to a consideration of the enormous influence which Seneca exerted during the period of the Renaissance in England and in various countries of the continent.

Curiously enough we have no occasion to linger long over the influence of Seneca in his native Spain; it seems to be another example of a prophet "not without honor save in his own country." We discover an isolated trace or two of Seneca's influence in that land; one of these, a work published in Madrid, 1633, contains a translation of Seneca's *Troas*, but as Cunliffe says: "the main current of the Spanish drama seems to have been little affected by classical influence."

Germany, too, we may briefly dismiss. Cunliffe[1] mentions only an early German dramatist, Gryphius, who "took Seneca

[1] *The Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy.* John W. Cunliffe, Macmillan Company, New York.

as his model." For the real importance of Seneca we must look to Italy, France and England. Cunliffe says: "He held so prominent a place in the revival of learning in Europe, and exercised such a great influence on the development of the modern drama that the study of his tragedies is of the utmost importance." Klein, in his *History of the Drama*, asserts that through Seneca "Euripidean tragedy leavened the dramatic poetry of every cultured nation in Europe through all the centuries, while Aeschylus and Sophocles fed the worms in the libraries."

Of Italy Cunliffe asserts: "The influence of Seneca runs through Italian tragedy from Mussato right down to Alfieri." Who was Mussato? As early as the beginning of the fourteenth century (1315, to be exact) we find a successful attempt to write, in imitation of Seneca's style, an original tragedy in Latin on a mediaeval historical theme. The dramatist was Albertino; his play was entitled *Ecerinis*. So successful was this play that the author was crowned before the famous university in Padua, and he was given the new name of Mussatus, a condensation of the Latin words *quasi musis aptus*—"Dear to the Muses." We should then think of Albertino Mussatus or Mussato as injecting renewed life into the European drama of the fourteenth century. He chose his themes from recent history, but he took as his model the Latin of Seneca as well as his meters and general style. When, subsequently, Italian dramatists abandoned the Latin for the Italian vernacular their plays were still written in strict conformity to the Senecan pattern. We are justified in placing Italy at the head of the countries which furthered the study and imitation of Seneca. After Italy had taken the lead in Senecan scholarship she steadily maintained it; before the end of the century in which Mussato did such pioneer work (the fourteenth) we find lecture-courses in Seneca established at Florence. To Italy also belongs the palm for precedence in printing editions of Seneca's plays and in performing his tragedies in the original Latin. To Italy belongs further the credit of producing the first known regular tragedy in any European vernacular on a modern stage. The

play was the *Orbecche* of Giambattista Giraldi Cinthio, brought out at Ferrara in 1541. This play, by utilizing the Senecan characteristics, established, once for all, the standard not only for subsequent Italian tragedies but to a great extent for the drama of other countries.

That we may gain space for a fuller treatment of the Senecan influence on English drama, we shall have to dismiss, with a comprehensive paragraph from George Saintsbury, the influence of Seneca on French tragedy: "Seneca took captive the whole drama of France, from Jodelle, through Garnier, and Montchrestien and even Hardy, through Corneille and Racine and Voltaire, leaving his traces even on Victor Hugo." The English reader who seeks an illustration of this Senecan influence on French drama may consult Kyd's translation of Garnier's *Cornelia*, published in 1594, a play which confirms Saintsbury's statement.

Passing, last, to England, we find that Seneca influenced English tragedy indirectly through both Italian and French literature. Kyd's translation of Garnier's *Cornelia* contributed toward familiarizing the English playwrights with Senecan peculiarities. Another play of Garnier's, *Antonius*, translated by the Countess of Pembroke in 1590 and printed in 1592, helped, also, in spreading the influence of Seneca in England through the intermediary of a French source.

A striking example of indirect Italian influence is the *Jocasta* of Gascoigne, 1566. This play represents four dramatists,—Euripides, Seneca, Ludovico Dolce, and a joint translation by George Gascoigne and Francis Kinwelmersh. Euripides wrote a *Phoenissae;* Ludovico Dolce, an Italian, made an adaptation of the Greek play, working it over on the model of Seneca, and writing it in Italian; Gascoigne reworked into English the Italian version of the Greek-Latin-Italian play, making a version yet producing something more than a translation, by adding, omitting, adapting at pleasure. The reader will find an excellent edition of this play by Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh in Heath's *Belles-Lettres Series* where the Italian of

Dolce and the version of Gascoigne are placed side by side, page by page. This is a valuable illustration of the way in which Seneca influenced English tragedy indirectly through Italian sources.

But we should not confine our attention to the indirect influence of Seneca upon English tragedy; unmistakable evidences of the direct influence confront the investigator at every hand. The English scholars of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries rated him quite as highly as did their continental contemporaries; Cunliffe asserts that even before the time of Chaucer (1340-1400) an English Dominican friar, Nicholas Trevet (or Trivet) had started in England a revival of Senecan study. A few of the many direct references in the English writers of the sixteenth century must suffice; Sir Thomas More, in the first book of his *Utopia*, 1516, refers to the *Octavia* which was then attributed to Seneca: "If you should suddenly come upon the stage in a philosopher's apparel and rehearse out of *Octavia* the place wherein Seneca disputeth with Nero." In 1523 Skelton in his *Garlande of Laurell* speaks with profound appreciation of "Senek full soberly with his tragedies." Roger Ascham (1515-1568) the famous English scholar and author, instructor of Queen Elizabeth, speaks of "our Seneca" in a way which implies familiarity with that author on the part of his readers; in his *The Scholemaster* Ascham ranks him by the side of Euripides and Sophocles as a tragic writer. In 1589, Nash, in his famous preface to Greene's *Menaphon* remarks: "Seneca let blood line by line and page by page, at length must needs die to our stage." Many other testimonies might be adduced. The quotation from Nash is conclusive in showing the universal influence of Seneca on Elizabethan drama, and as recording the wholesale quotation of his lines in the English tragedies of the period. Historians of English drama regard Shirley (1596-1666) as the last of the great race of Elizabethan dramatists; his plays show that even to the end of the Elizabethan age Seneca's influence continued at least in the choice of subjects. Shirley's themes are still the familiar stories of lust and gore; the conclusion of his *The*

Traitor might, by its accumulation of horrors, make even his great predecessor envious.

That Shakespeare was familiar with Seneca (either in the original Latin or in translation) is shown by what Polonius says of the players in *Hamlet.* Probably Shakespeare was acquainted with the original Latin of this author; whether or not he went back to the original, or was satisfied with available translations, cannot be definitely ascertained. Seneca was studied in the last years of the "grammar schools" of England. It is likely that he was included among the Latin authors whom Shakespeare read while he was at the Stratford Grammar School. On the other hand, his plays had all been translated into English in the early part of Elizabeth's reign which began in 1558. Professors Neilson and Thorndike[1] evidently incline to the belief that Shakespeare contented himself with a translation: "The impression which the evidence from the textbooks as a whole leaves on one is that Shakespeare took from school enough Latin to handle an occasional quotation and to extract the plot of a play, but that he probably preferred to use a translation when one was to be had."

To what extent was Shakespeare indebted to Seneca? Professor Cunliffe's erudite work set the pace for subsequent scholars who brought together a great mass of citations which proved, or at least sought to prove, constant borrowing. Thus, the bloodshed and the influence of fate in *Henry VI* are attributed to Seneca because these are favorite themes of that author; the ghost in *Hamlet* recalls the ghosts in which he delighted. The newer work by Lucas[2] is much more conservative. Most of the passages cited by Cunliffe and other scholars as proof of Senecan influence may be mere coincidences; of the ghost in *Hamlet,* for instance, Lucas admits that it does indeed conform to the genuine Senecan type of ghosts, but he thinks that they had become so common, so "naturalized" in England in Shakespeare's day that he need not have gone all the

[1] *The Facts About Shakespeare.* Neilson & Thorndike, Macmillan Co., N. Y.
[2] *Seneca and Elizabethan Tragedy.* F. L. Lucas, Cambridge Univ. Press. 1922.

way back to the Latin for his inspiration. Whether Shakespeare went there for his ghost in *Hamlet* or merely duplicated the "naturalized" ghosts of his day is unimportant; in either case the ghost in *Hamlet* apparently originated in Seneca. Lucas expresses succinctly his opinion of the common tendency to find in Shakespeare constant evidences of copyings, direct or indirect, from the Roman author: "It must be said, once for all, about the bulk of Shakespeare's supposed borrowings from Seneca, that one grows more and more sceptical."

Though we should give due weight to the caution of Lucas not to consider every coincidence as a copying, intentional or unintentional, of Seneca, we should not permit ourselves to minimize unduly the really enormous influence which that author exerted upon Elizabethan literature as a whole; to underrate his influence would be quite as mischievous as to overrate it. Lucas himself admits that in the case of Chapman and Marston, for instance, the evidence of actual indebtedness is "convincing." The many quotations from the Latin text found in Elizabethan tragedies is in itself conclusive proof of first-hand acquaintance. The university-trained dramatists went directly to the original Latin for their inspiration; lesser scholars consulted English versions, especially the famous version of 1581.

It would be difficult to overestimate the literary significance of the translation which appeared in 1581 under the title *Seneca his Tenne Tragedies*. Although the book bears the date 1581, and gives the name of the editor as Thomas Newton, it should be noted that this is not the date of the translations as a whole, and that Thomas Newton is merely the editor of all of the ten tragedies. As a fact, all the translations in the volume, with the exception of the *Thebais*, had previously been published; Newton, the editor, added, for the sake of completeness, the *Thebais*. The translations of the other nine plays varied in their scholarship and in their evidences of mental maturity (the version of the *Oedipus* was the work of a lad of fifteen). The translations are fairly literal but not always accurate; the translators, when confronted by obscure passages

in the original, often turned the unintelligible Latin into meaningless English, or adopted the easier method of omitting the lines.

Whatever the merits or the demerits of the translation of 1581 there can be no doubt of the enormous influence which it speedily acquired in shaping English tragedy. The finest scholars of that day went directly to the original; Latinists of a less robust type used the translation as a help; those with no Latin, and they were numerous, limited themselves to the English version. Thus, the famous translation of 1581 became a dramatic handbook which made Seneca the basis of tragic composition.

The reader may of course ask at this point, "Why did the Elizabethans content themselves with a second-rate Latin dramatist when they might have gone back to the masters,—Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides?" The answer is that in Elizabethan times very few English scholars were acquainted with the Greek tragedians either in the original or in translations. A few learned men in England, Italy, France and Germany could read Sophocles and Euripides in the Greek, but the English dramatists took as their exemplars and patterns the Latin critic Horace and the Latin tragedian Seneca.

What are these *Tenne Tragedies* which made so profound an impression upon Elizabethan drama? The titles are: *Octavia*, *Hercules Oetaeus*, *Phoenissae*, *Agamemnon*, *Hercules Furens*, *Troades*, *Medea*, *Phaedra*, *Oedipus*, *Thyestes*. The translators never felt any of the doubts, never dreamed of the scepticism entertained by modern scholars regarding the authorship of some of these plays. Classical critics now refuse to accept the *Octavia* as a work of Seneca; the authenticity of the *Agamemnon* is questioned; the *Hercules Oetaeus* (or at least a considerable portion of it) is not by him; the *Thebais* (a combination of two fragments) is also under strong suspicion.

An important fact regarding the tragedies of Seneca, a fact which was unknown to the translators of the 1581 edition, is that he never intended his plays for actual stage performance; he designed them for *recitation*, not for *acting*. They

belong to the dramatic species known today as "closet drama." That the translators of 1581 never suspected this extremely important fact is shown by the assertion of Nevyle, the youthful translator of the *Oedipus*, that this play was intended for "tragicall and pompous showe upon stage." The difference between a play written for the express purpose of a stage performance and one written for reading or mere recitation is very great. The writer of a real stage play has to keep constantly before his mind's eye a critical audience that will test every word, every action of the finished play. "Will this thought be clear?" "Will this dialogue seem too wordy?" "Will this stage business be effective?" These are a few of the searching questions which the writer continually puts to himself. The author of a closet drama has no such anxieties; he can soar into a poetic flight, he can introduce metaphysical discussions at will; he can insert into his narrative scenes that could not possibly be enacted on the stage; he is, in a word, unfettered by most of the restrictions that check yet stimulate the writer of a stage play. A closet drama is a legitimate form so long as it does not pretend to be a stage play. Seneca's tragedies are perfect illustrations of this species of dramatic composition. The failure of the Elizabethans to make the distinction had a disastrous effect upon the writers who took Seneca as their model; what was allowable in a mere dramatic reading would not always pass in a real stage performance. A closet drama, when recited, necessarily threw the supreme stress upon a single reader; such a play became almost entirely a succession of monologues and dialogues, relieved by musical interludes. Furthermore, it was very difficult to differentiate the speeches; the dialogues crystallized into a fixed type, especially inclined to ranting when written by a Roman of the era of Nero. A gathering of that period was accustomed to a floridly rhetorical style of diction; it was well acquainted with the Augustan poets; to please such an audience a writer had to indulge in long descriptions, in poetic flights of fancy with copious allusions to mythology and to the poets of the golden age.

What, then, are some of the qualities of the closet dramas

of Seneca which were transferred to the stage performance of Elizabethan times? Briefly stated, they are: the adoption of the five-act structure; his employment of the chorus; his stock characters, especially ghosts; his philosophical monologues and speeches, his violent passions, his scenes of horror, his flamboyant rhetoric. All of these borrowings may be found in Elizabethan tragedies, sometimes singly, sometimes in combination.

Four striking examples of English-Senecan tragedy are: *Gorboduc*, 1562; *Jocasta*, 1566; *The Tragedie of Tancred and Gismund*, 1567-8; *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, 1588. These four plays bear indubitable evidence of indebtedness in style and in treatment.

That the influence of Seneca upon Elizabethan drama was in some respects injurious is undeniable, but it would be decidedly unfair to emphasize only the unfavorable aspect of that influence. Though he did harm, he conferred compensating benefits; the exuberance of the early English tragedians threatened to burst all bonds and barriers; the congenial murders, the horrors of Seneca threatened to sweep off their feet his English imitators. Though their exemplar was violent and sensational, he was, nevertheless, a Roman classical writer, and, what was more important, a Roman writer under the influence of the Greek classical spirit. Thus, a double strain of classicism, diluted though it might be, leavened his work,—the elegance of the Greek, the latent sense of decorum of the Romans. Untrammeled in spirit, he was, in form at least, thoroughly classical; it was precisely in the direction of form that the classical Seneca could be of real service to the tumultuous Renaissance writers. To the English stage he gave form, structure, regularity, dignity, qualities which the stage especially needed at that time of national exhilaration.

Chapter XXII

THE ROMAN THEATER

As we read of the theater buildings at Rome which preceded the first permanent structure erected by Pompey in 55 B. C. we are impressed by the difficulties with which the early Roman dramatists had to contend. The government systematically frowned on every movement that seemed in the least inspired or suggested by the Greeks, whom they so heartily despised; imitations of Greek dramatic features seemed to the censors especially noxious. For many years the only theater equipment they would allow was a wooden platform specially erected for each performance and pulled down at the close; around this stage the spectators had to stand; no seats were provided; those who wished a chair or stool had to carry it personally or have it brought by a slave; even this privilege was soon forbidden by the censors. Stand or sit or recline on the bare ground was the rule.

We shall describe very briefly some of the temporary structures erected under these drastic restrictions.

In 240 B. C. a Greek, Livius Andronicus by name, a native of Magna Graecia, Italy, brought out a real play which he had translated and adapted into Latin from a Greek original. About five years later, 235 B. C., a younger contemporary, Gnaeus Naevius, also exhibited plays in public. Neither Andronicus nor his successor Naevius had a real theater at his disposal; their stage consisted of a temporary wooden platform; the auditorium was an open space inclosed by a wooden fence; the spectators had to stand, or if they preferred, they sat or reclined on the ground.

In 179 B. C. a stone stage was built in the vicinity of the temple of Apollo; this was probably for the specific purpose

of celebrating the *Ludi Apollinares*. Five years later, 174 B. C., we read of arrangements for the erection by the state of a permanent stage; whether or not this project was carried out is unknown.

In 155 B. C. it looked as though a permanent theater was at last in sight. The censors awarded a contract for a stone structure with regular seats, but serious opposition at once developed; Publius Cornelius Scipio Nasica (a formidable citizen

ROMAN THEATER AT ORANGE, FRANCE. ENTRANCE.

with an awe-inspiring name) persuaded the Senate in the following year to tear down the portion already completed. It is worth while to quote the express reason alleged by the great objector: "on the ground that it is useless and will prove injurious to public morals." (*tanquam inutile et nociturum publicis moribus.*) How familiar it all sounds to the modern theater-goer; it was not so very long ago, in fact within the memory of living men, when the city fathers of one of our largest American cities refused to license a theatrical perform-

THE THEATER AT ORANGE EXTERNAL VIEW.

ance with a curtain on the ground that "a curtain suggests concealment and concealment suggests impropriety."

In 145 B. C. a theater larger than the ordinary structure was built, with a stage, back and side walls, and an auditorium with seats; even this was of wood, and the structure was demolished after the performance for which it had been erected.

As a classical example of the amazing extravagance shown in the erection of wooden structures which were at once demolished after the exhibition had been given, we may cite that erected in 58 B. C. by the Aedile Aemilius Scaurus. This building, which, according to an ancient authority, seated eighty thousand persons, had a stage with a back wall which was adorned with three hundred and sixty columns; it was three stories high; the first story was decorated with marble, the second with glass, the third with gold plates; between the columns were the almost incredible number of three thousand bronze statues. The auditorium vied with the back wall in its sumptuous decoration of pictures and purple carpets. This theater cost its builder about $4,000,000. Like all its predecessors, it was built of inflammable wood, and it met its end in a conflagration started by the slaves of the Aedile who revolted against the treatment which they had received from him.

The gorgeous theater of Aemilius Scaurus had set a standard for extravagance which seemed unapproachable; but the desire of the Roman politicians to secure the favor and the votes of the people was quite as eager as that of their modern descendants. A certain Gaius Curio, holding the influential position of Tribune of the People, devised a startling scheme, calculated to make the citizens of Rome turn their wondering eyes from the dazzling theater of Aemilius Scaurus to a newer and greater marvel. The project was vast and called for enormous expenditure; Scaurus, though opulent in ideas, was short of *denarii.* A certain canny politician, Caesar by name, the Julius Caesar to whom some six years later the noble Brutus was to attribute the "grievous fault" of "ambition" had the money and he had an acquisitive eye on the constituents of the Tribune; he therefore provided the funds and Scaurus

THE GRAND THEATER AT POMPEII. FROM THE EXTERIOR.

contributed the mechanical ingenuity. The outcome was a structure consisting of two semicircular buildings which could be used as independent theaters, and, by an elaborate mechanism, instantly be brought together so as to form a perfect amphitheater in which gladiatorial and other exhibitions could be given. As Pliny describes the building, it was a marvel in its day, and it is still a source of curiosity to skilled architects. Pliny is outspoken in his indignation at the building and the uses to which it was put. It was, he says, dangerous to operate, owing to the delicacy of the machinery; the gladiatorial conflicts which were presented in the combined structures were an offering to the *Manes* of the builder's dead father. In the whole affair Pliny saw only wickedness and insanity; wickedness on the part of the builder who risked the lives of the entire audience in his desire to offer a sacrifice to his father's spirit; insanity on the part of the Roman people, who, after conquering the whole world, were willing to entrust their existence to a pair of pivots in a flying machine.

The year 55 B. C. is of importance in the history of the Roman drama, for it marks the erection of the first permanent theater in Rome. This building, erected by Pompey, stood in the Campus Martius; it was of stone and was completely equipped. Pliny asserts that it had room for forty thousand spectators; this statement is thoroughly discounted today; the Italian authority Lanciani thinks that seventeen thousand five hundred and eighty would be nearer the facts. The theater has almost entirely disappeared.

Two other structures, both built in the year 13 B. C., deserve passing mention. One of these, known as the theater of Balbus (built by Cornelius Balbus), with room for eleven thousand five hundred spectators, has utterly disappeared; the ruins of the other, known as the theater of Marcellus, built by Augustus and named after his nephew, are still to be seen in Rome.

The theaters of Pompey, Balbus, and Marcellus are the only ones of stone known to have been erected in ancient Rome. Their predecessors were all of wood, and, even under the

THE THEATER AT ORANGE.

empire, wooden structures continued to be the prevailing type.

One of the best preserved antique theaters is that of the Roman theater at Orange, France. It conforms fully to the orthodox construction; the stage, about one hundred and ninety feet wide, was backed by a high wall of three stories richly adorned with columns and statues; doors in the rear and the side walls of the stage permitted the entrances and exits of the actors. As this stately architectural structure was permanent it must have been used in all plays brought out in this theater.

Advanced as were the Greeks in the arts they were surpassed by the practical Romans in several branches of applied science. The Greeks never reached, in road building, results comparable with the enduring highways which the Romans constructed not for a day but for all time; when, too, we see the remains of the gigantic aqueducts which the Roman engineers built we think of the Athenian women carrying home on their heads from the community springs the day's water supply. Magnificent as are the temples of ancient Greece,—the Parthenon, the Theseum, the Erechtheum,—the Greeks were inferior to the Romans in certain important branches of architecture. In constructing their theaters they found it convenient and economical to utilize the slope of a hill; in the earliest period of theatrical building in Italy the Romans copied the hillside method of construction, but ultimately they began to employ the arch, and, thenceforth, they built their theaters on level ground.

Plays at Rome were regularly performed at the four public games and on the recurrence of the *Ludi Saeculares*, but occasionally also at dedications, at celebrations of triumphs, votive offerings, services in honor of celebrated citizens and the funeral obsequies of famous men. The four public festivals at which dramas were presented as part of the celebration were:

Ludi Megalenses, April
Ludi Apollinares, July
Ludi Romani, September
Ludi Plebeii, November.

For some time after Livius Andronicus plays were presented only at the *Ludi Romani* under the Curule Aediles. It was at the celebration of the *Ludi Romani* that the first regular theatrical performance took place; somewhat later they were also made a part of the *Ludi Megalenses* under the Curule Aediles, and the *Ludi Plebeii* (under the Plebeian Aediles); after 212 or 211 B. C. they were also made a part of the *Ludi Apollinares* (under the Praetor Urbanus).

THE ANCIENT ROMAN THEATER AT FIESOLE, ITALY.

Down to 174 B. C. the dramatic performances were held near the temple of the particular god in whose honor the *ludi* took place. Funeral games were held in the Forum; the *Ludi Romani* were, perhaps, also held there; the *Ludi Apollinares* were, at least in the earlier years, held in the Circus Maximus.

The general resemblance between a Greek and a Roman theater was so great that for our purpose it will suffice to indicate a few of the features which distinguished the Roman type from the Greek. First, we may mention what to us seems a minor matter, though to the Roman architects it was a question of exact geometric measurement. The orchestra of a Greek theater was, as we have said, originally a perfect circle, but

later the form was reduced to something between a circle and a semicircle,—"a semi-circle with the ends prolonged"; that of a Roman theater was an exact semicircle. A second difference is the removal of the Roman chorus to the stage and the reservation of the orchestra for the Senate. A third is the absence of a curtain in the Greek theater and the employment of such a device in some at least of the Roman structures. The Roman stage was wider, deeper, and lower than the Greek stage of the Hellenic period. The Romans of the historic period built on level ground with elaborate substructures as foundations; the Greeks systematically utilized a hillside for the auditorium. A few other minor architectural differences, of little interest to any but technical students, need not detain us.

The first trace of reserved places for special classes is found in 194 B. C. when a space, near the stage, was marked off for the senators; even these august officials were not provided with seats; those who wished to sit had to provide their own chairs, brought by their slaves. The reservation provoked a protest from those who resented the attempt at class distinctions. Social castes were much more marked in the Roman than in the Greek theater; the orchestra was henceforth reserved exclusively for the senators and ambassadors and specially distinguished guests; the first fourteen rows of the auditorium (*cavea*) were set apart by the *Lex Roscia*, 67 B.C., for the knights (equites). A strange exception was made in the exclusion of knights who were bankrupt. A serious embarrassment later developed, because of the great number of aristocrats who had lost all, or nearly all, their property, in the civil wars; to eject these impoverished but haughty Romans from the seats which had been assigned to their class might easily have resulted in serious political complications. Accordingly, Augustus modified the severity of the *Lex Roscia* sufficiently to permit any bankrupt knight to retain his seat provided he could prove that either he or his father had possessed an amount of money sufficient to entitle him to equestrian rank (40,000 sesterces). Augustus went still further in his modification of the laws regarding seating arrangements; he assigned special places to

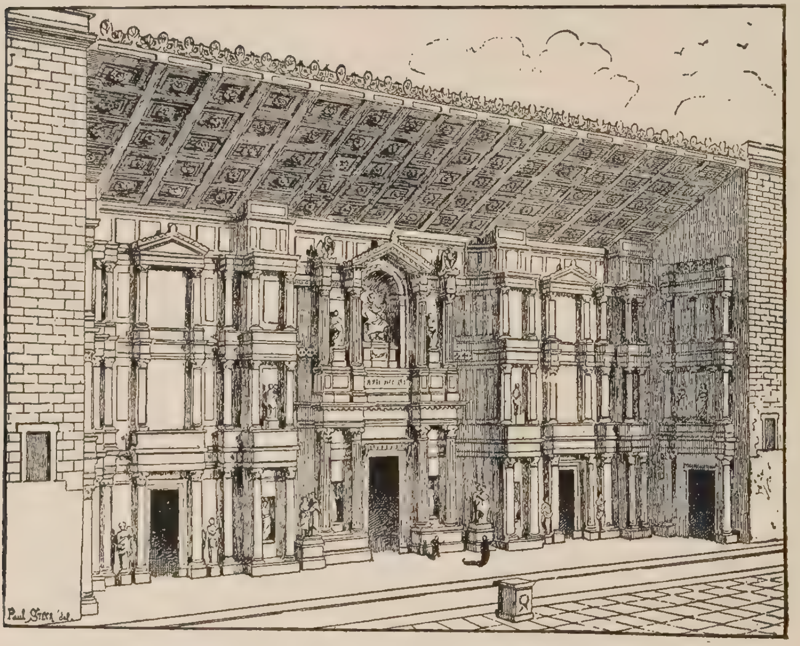
women, to boys who were not yet old enough to don the *toga virilis*, to their paedagogi, to soldiers, and to married men of plebeian rank. In some of the provincial towns the first rows in the *cavea* were reserved for the councillors of the town. Another striking social distinction in the Roman theater, alien to the spirit of the Greek democracy, was shown in the two special elevated boxes (*tribunalia*), one at each end of the stage; in one of these sat the emperor; in the opposite box were seated the empress and the vestal virgins.

Inasmuch as the chorus had practically disappeared from Roman dramatic performance, it was no longer necessary to reserve the orchestra for their evolutions. Very rarely the chorus still appeared in Roman plays; an example is found in the *Rudens* of Plautus, who doubtless transferred into his play the chorus which he found in the Greek comedy from which he borrowed his plot. When the chorus was employed in Roman plays it came out upon the stage when needed, sang a choral ode, and retired until its services were again needed. It is generally agreed that on the stage stood an altar; critics differ regarding the name of the god to whom it was dedicated; one authority says that it was sacred to Liber,—the Roman counterpart of the Greek god Dionysus in whose worship dramas were produced at Athens; another affirms that it was usually dedicated to Apollo; still another theory is that there were on the stage two altars,—one dedicated to Liber, the other to the deity of the particular *ludi* in whose name the plays were presented.

The Roman theater was built on the general model of the late Greek theater, but in the course of its transplantation to Italian soil it underwent several modifications. In the chapter on the Greek theater we discuss the question whether or not the theater of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides had a stage; despite the difference of opinion regarding the existence of a stage in the classic period, there is no question that the later Greek theaters, those dating from what is called the "Hellenic-Greek period," the era after the time of Alexander the Great, (336-323 B.C.), had one. It was this platform, sometimes

called a *logeion* ("speaking place") which was carried over into the Roman theaters and became the pattern of our modern stage.

The permanent back wall, so much more elaborate than its Greek counterpart, demands a detailed description. It had, as a rule, three doors, but occasionally we find as many as five; there was also an additional entrance in each side wall. In



RESTORATION OF THE STAGE OF THE THEATER AT ORANGE.

comedy the wall represented the fronts of ordinary city houses; of the usual three doors two might belong to one house, or each might belong to a separate domicile. The doors opened outward, but in such a way that they did not disclose the interior; the Roman stage, like that of the Greeks, had no means of disclosing the inside of a building; hence all conversation was to be thought of as occurring in the open street, or at the threshold of the house door. The doors in the side walls were used for entrances and exits; whenever an actor was supposed to enter from a place other than the interior of the house, the

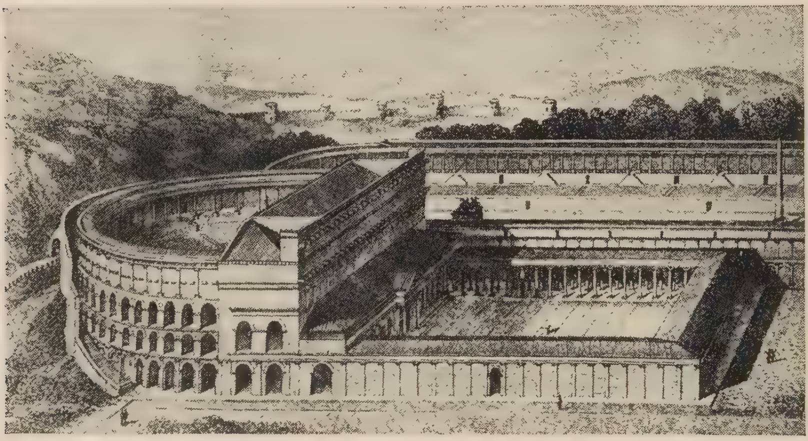
doors were used conventionally to indicate the place from which the new arrival had come; if he entered by a certain door, he was supposed to have come from the forum and the center of the city; if by the other, he was to be thought of as arriving from the country. Because of the uncertainty as to whether the terms "right" and "left" in old writers refer to the actors or to the audience there is a dispute among critics as to which of the stage doors indicated entrance from the city, which an arrival from the country. We need not go into the details of the controversy; the essential and undisputed fact is that at both Athens and Rome the entrances were used conventionally, and clearly indicated to the audience the place from which the new arrival had come.

The determined opposition to seats in Roman theaters forms a curious chapter in dramatic history. During the Republican period as a whole the erection of permanent theaters with seats was thought by the Romans to be an aping of Greek luxury and unworthy of the stern simplicity of a Roman citizen; this was one of the reasons which led Scipio Nasica to induce the Romans in 154 B. C. to pull down the theater which Longinus had begun. The prejudice died hard; even as late as 55 B.C. when Pompey erected his famous theater, he was obliged to resort to a clever manoeuver to carry out his determined plan of providing seats; he built a shrine of Venus Victrix at the top of the auditorium and dedicated the whole building as a temple to Venus rather than as a theater; by this clever subterfuge the authorities were forced to regard the benches not as parts of a theater, but simply as steps leading up to the sacred shrine.

Unlike the Greek theater, the Romans used a curtain. Most critics assume the universal use of curtains in Roman theaters; others, because of the architectural difficulties involved, consider it more probable that they were confined to the exceptional structures which were roofed. An excellent example of a theater which employed a curtain is that at Pompeii, where a slot in the stage shows us how the curtain was manipulated; the method was precisely the opposite of that in

vogue in modern structures; in a Roman theater the curtain was not raised at the beginning and lowered at the end of a performance; it was worked on a roller that revolved in a wide depression at the front of the stage; the curtain was lowered at the opening and raised at the close of a performance.

Occasionally, a secondary curtain (*siparium*) was employed behind the main curtain; the exact method of use is uncertain; some consider it merely a drop used during the minor pauses



RECONSTRUCTION OF THE THEATER AT ORANGE.

of the play; others think that it was used to conceal, temporarily, a portion of the stage and that it could be drawn aside to reveal the concealed object or objects. This latter use finds a parallel in the *traverse*,—the secondary curtain which the Elizabethans used to conceal temporarily an object from the other actors or from the audience.

Most of the Roman theaters, like those of Greece, and again like the Elizabethan theaters and the Spanish structures of Calderon's day, were open to the sky; over the stage, however, was a roof, designed to protect the actors against inclement weather; here, also, we find an anticipation of the covered stage of the Elizabethan theaters.

During the later Empire, when luxury had increased and effeminacy was sapping the vitality of the national life, the

Romans spread enormous awnings over the auditorium to protect the spectators from the glare of the sun; they also constructed a sprinkling system which refreshed the audience with a spray of fine mist; at a still later period, not content with pure water they made a mixture of wine, water and crocus-juice, and projected it in a delicate and fragrant rain through high pressure pipes.

The use of elaborate scenery on the Roman stage cannot, it is thought, be traced back further than about 100 B.C.; once introduced, however, it was used on a greater and more complicated scale than the Greeks had ever devised. Vitruvius mentions three kinds of scenery:

(1) For the tragic drama,—façades with columns representing public buildings;
(2) For comic plays, private houses with windows and balconies;
(3) For satyr-drama, rustic scenes with mountains, caverns and trees.

In the plays of Plautus and Terence there is never a change of scene. Beginning with the first century B.C., however, provision was made for a transfer; two methods of scene shifting were employed known respectively as *scaena ductilis* and *scaena versilis*. By the first method a bit of scenery was pushed to one side, thus disclosing a new set. The second method had already been employed on the Greek stage; the mechanism was called in Greek a *periaktos* (Latin, *periactus*); the Roman as well as the Greek stage used *periacti*; their employment in Roman theaters dates from the year 79 B. C. and is credited to two theater men, Marcus and Lucius Licinius Lucullus.

Other devices which were, in principle, at least, imitations of Greek stage machinery were: a method of bringing actors into sight from beneath the stage (suggestive of the Greek *Charon's Steps*), and of causing their appearance and disappearance in mid-air (a practice which at once calls to mind the Greek *theologeion* and the *deus ex machina*).

The givers of the games at Rome were known as *ludorum*

datores. At first a Roman dramatist brought out his own plays, and he hired slaves and freedmen for the acting rôles; as early as the time of Plautus this custom went out of use and the actual work of production passed into the hands of practical theatrical managers. Occasionally, the three functions of poet, manager and actor blended as a whole or in part; for example, the dramatic poet Livius Andronicus played a triple rôle: he was his own manager and he acted in his own plays.

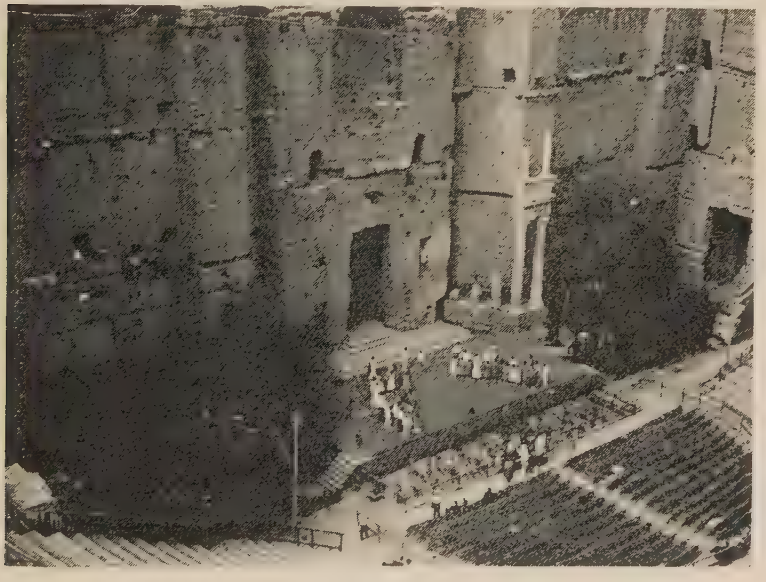
The giver of a public game made an arrangement with the manager of a troupe (the dominus gregis). The dominus selected the play, he made his financial bargain with the poet, buying such a play as seemed likely to prove successful; in this way the dominus became the connecting link between the poet and the giver of the game. All three were interested in the success of the play: the giver was looking for prestige; the poet for fame; the dominus for money, for his fee depended upon the success of the performance. Even the actors had something at stake; those who won the applause of the audience were entertained at a banquet by the dominus; those who did poorly were flogged.

At a call to assemble in the theater a crier (*praeco*) announced to the populace that the performance was about to begin. Some critics think that the actor who was to recite the prologue appeared before the assembled audience and bade the crier demand silence that the prologue might be heard (*exsurge, praeco, fac populo audientiam*). Just before the play began the *dominus gregis* or the herald (*praeco*) announced to the audience the title of the play (*pronuntio tituli*), the name of the Roman author, and the title of the Greek play upon which the Latin drama was based; sometimes, however, it was the lines of the spoken prologue which gave to the audience their first information regarding the subject of the play and the name of the dramatist.

The Roman theaters were opened for dramatic performance in the daytime only; the plays seem to have been given between two meal times known respectively as *prandium* (about 12 o'clock noon) and the principal meal of the day, *cena*,

which was taken about 3 P. M., although the hour varied. During this short period of about three hours it is not likely that more than one play was presented; at a later period, however, that of Cicero, performances were also given in the early morning.

A Roman audience was much more demonstrative than an Athenian gathering, though the Athenians were by no means



A MODERN PERFORMANCE IN THE THEATER AT ORANGE.

reticent in expressing their likes and dislikes. A performance in a Roman theater was given under great difficulties; the men came strolling in late; the women laughed and talked aloud; the children, brought in by their nurses, cried and screamed. The crowd was easily excited; the slightest violation of the rules of the stage might evoke a storm of hisses; if in the midst of a performance the rumor ran around the audience that a gladiatorial combat had started in another part of the city a rush was made for the exits. The most famous dramatist might find his play suddenly brought to a stop through the lack of an audience; even Terence once had the humiliation

of seeing his audience desert in a body when the word was passed around that there was a boxing-bout going on near by; the Romans greatly preferred the sight of real blood to the imitations on the legitimate stage. Besides all these handicaps

TERRA-COTTA STATUETTES OF ROMAN MIMES.
Fool types from Roman times. British Museum.

to a performance in a Roman theater, companies of *claquers* (*fautores theatrales operae*) were hired by partisans or rivals of authors and artists, some to hiss, some to applaud the play or the actor; these conflicts of friends and foes led to scenes of uproar, culminating, by no means rarely, in the days of the Empire, in sanguinary fights and even murders.

The actors in a Roman play were slaves or in later times freedmen. There is a marked contrast between the social position of actors at Athens and at Rome; at Athens the actor was held in the highest esteem; he was regarded as participating in the religious worship of the god Dionysus; no one ever dreamed of attaching any social stigma to his profession; at Rome the professional actor was as despised as at Athens he was esteemed. Actors at Rome had absolutely no social position; no Roman citizen could adopt the stage as a means of livelihood without losing all civic rights and privileges. To a Roman the sacred or religious connotation of a dramatic performance was but slight. Roman actors as a class were under the social ban of *infamia;* by an official praetorian edict the following classes were pronounced socially disreputable: deserters, panders, thieves, robbers, actors; any one who appeared on the stage was excluded from all public honors and from service in the army; if a soldier, he was punished by death. If an actor or his son married the daughter, the granddaughter or the great-granddaughter of a senator the marriage might be pronounced illegal. Though the manager of a troupe (*dominus gregis*) was himself an actor, and as such subject to the same social ostracism as the members of his company, he had absolute power over his troupe and he flogged them mercilessly if they blundered during a performance. It should be noted, however, that Augustus modified or possibly abrogated entirely, the right to inflict corporal punishment upon actors; in later times their social position improved so decidedly that we even find them holding in municipal towns (*municipia*) positions of honor from which they had been explicitly excluded by the *Lex Julia Municipalis.*

In spite, however, of the general contempt in which actors were held at Rome, individuals sometimes succeeded in raising themselves above the status of their class, and in gaining both wealth and social consideration; a notable example was the famous Roscius, who is to this day the synonym of a superlative artist; but little less famous was another Roman, Aesopus.

Until a late period the actors were, with a single exception,

exclusively men, who appeared in female costume; the exception was the species of plays known as mimes (*mimi*); in these the female rôles were really taken by women.

The general name for a Roman actor was *histrio,* but each separate class had, in addition, a special name; the comedian was called a *comoedus,* the tragedian a *tragoedus;* the mime a *mimus.* The name of the company as a whole was *grex* or *caterva;* at the head of the company stood the manager, called *dominus gregis;* the director of a troupe of mimes was called *archimimus.* In the chapter on Greek Tragedy reference is made to the limitation of the number of performers; no such restrictions confronted the Roman dramatist; the Romans loved a full stage, and from the later period of the Republic they liked to see the scene crowded with supernumeraries; this accorded with their military instinct and gratified their taste for spectacle and tumult in the theater as well as in the arena. The practical consideration of expense, however, tended somewhat to keep down the number of actors; managers showed a preference for a cast consisting of a few superior artists rather than a great number of second-rate performers.

Plays at Rome were produced as part of the free entertainment provided by the state for the Roman populace. The tickets of admission (*tesserae*) did not confer the privilege of reserved seats; they simply indicated the block or section and the row within which the holder was to take his seat.

EASTERN DRAMA

XXIII. INTRODUCTION TO EASTERN DRAMA
XXIV. INDIAN DRAMA
XXV. CHINESE DRAMA
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Chapter XXIII

INTRODUCTION TO EASTERN DRAMA

One of the first questions a student of linguistics asks when he begins a new language is, "To what group does this belong?" He finds no difficulty in classifying Sanskrit; it is by common consent put under the great Indo-Germanic family, to which Greek, Latin, English, German, French, Italian and other Romance languages belong. When, however, he passes to Chinese and Japanese he finds it more difficult to decide on the tag which he must attach to these languages. Fifty years ago he would unhesitatingly have called them "Turanian"; in those days the term was applied to all Asiatic languages except those which were clearly Indo-Germanic, or Semitic. Max Müller the famous philologist of the last generation proposed to apply the designation "Turanian" to all languages of Europe, Asia, and Oceania which were neither Indo-Germanic nor Semitic. He made, however, an exception in the case of the Chinese language. The word "Turanian" is now so nearly obsolete that the new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* does not contain an article under this word; the languages which were formerly loosely tagged as "Turanian" are now minutely subdivided into eight or nine divisions.

What, then, are the languages of China and Japan? Modern grammarians regard the family to which the Japanese language belongs as a very small group. The tongues most nearly related to it are the Luchuan and those which are spoken on the islands between Japan and Loo-choo. On the Asiatic mainland the Korean shows resemblances in grammar and in etymology. Efforts have been made by modern scholars to discover other languages which might be classified as cog-

nate, but the efforts have met with little success. It is, however, established that the Japanese language is not related to that of China.

One essential difference between Chinese and Japanese is seen in their structure. Chinese belongs to what is known as the Monosyllabic type; Japanese is known as an Agglutinative language; Sanskrit belongs to the Inflectional group. A brief description of each of these forms will serve to show the essential differences between the three tongues, the drama of which we are to consider in subsequent chapters. Chinese is a monosyllabic language; each word expresses a complete idea; it has no inflections; the words cannot be subdivided into the various parts of speech, such as nouns, pronouns, adjectives, or adverbs; the same Chinese word may serve as a noun, adjective, a verb or an adverb. Since it has no inflections, (Genitive, Dative and other cases as in Latin), these cases must be indicated by the relation of the word to others in the same sentence; hence the position in the clause and the employment of supplementary words are of much greater importance than in other languages.

Japanese is as we have said an Agglutinative speech. Webster's dictionary defines an Agglutinative language as one in which "the root or its derivative is modified by the joining to it of secondary roots which gradually lose their original independence and resolve into mere prefixes, suffixes, infixes, etc."

Sanskrit is an Inflectional language. We are so familiar with the members of this group that detailed explanations are unnecessary; it is however interesting to note that Webster's dictionary considers an Inflectional language a development of the Agglutinative stage; as this dictionary specifically states it: Inflectional languages are those which are "so developed from the Agglutinative stage that the root meanings are lost from the accessory elements to such a degree that these elements cannot serve as separable prefixes, suffixes, etc., but become mere conjugational and declensional forms, securely attached to the roots."

The settlement on a name for India as a whole has been a

very gradual process; we might suppose that from the classical Sanskrit we could derive a genuinely native appellation for the country. Occidental students who know something of that language and are aware that it is an Indo-Germanic tongue, imagine that a knowledge of Sanskrit will take them anywhere throughout India; as a fact, although the Indo-Germanic (Aryan) inhabitants of India number at the latest census nearly 233,000,000 out of a total of 319,000,000, these Aryans employ no less than twenty-five distinct languages or dialects, and these form but a small part of the aggregate of two hundred and twenty-two vernaculars in the country.

The Sanskrit name for India, *Bharata-Varsha*, goes back to *Bharata*, a legendary king. At one time the country was named Hindustan, but today the word is limited to the part of India around the sources of the river Ganges where the spoken language is Hindu. A very old and now generally discarded name, the "East Indies", given by early explorers was used as a contrast to "West Indies". The word *India* comes from the Greek *Indos* which originated in the Sanskrit *Sindhu*, a "river". The great river of India was called the *Indus* (the river) very much as the title *Rio Grande* (great river) is applied to the North American stream 1770 miles long, which flows from southwestern Colorado to the Gulf of Mexico. *India* has been the generally accepted designation for the country since it passed under the control of the British; it has now become one of the imperial titles of the British king.

In the chapter on Indian Drama we confine our treatment to plays written in Sanskrit. A brief preliminary description of the Sanskrit language may prove helpful. We must begin with a collection of hymns known to scholars as the *Rig-Veda;* although this collection probably included many divergent dialects, we may accept the collection as representing, upon the whole, the particular vernacular spoken in the extensive region to which geographers give the name the "Midland". Another name, more significant, applied to this region was Aryavarta (home of the Aryans). This dialect became standardized through its employment in literature; assisted by the labors

of scholarly grammarians, it became more and more refined until, about 300 B. C., the name *Samskrta* (Sanskrit), that is, "purified", was given to this cultivated form of the dialect of the region. In sharp contrast to the word Sanskrit, "purified", applied to this polished vernacular, we find the word *Prakrta* (Prakrit) that is, "natural", "unpurified", given not only to the rude folk speech of the Midland district but to the numerous Indo-Aryan dialects of other parts of India; all these vernaculars, in contrast to the "purified" (Sanskrit) dialect, were known as the "unpurified" (Prakrit). This "purified" form became the standard for religious ritual and elegant literature. The fact that the "purified" language originated in the Midlands of India and that it became the standard for ritual and literature gave so great a prestige to the Midland that this portion of India was spoken of as the home of the pure Indo-Aryan speech.

Although in our chapter on Indian Drama we must confine ourselves to Sanskrit plays we should remember that besides these plays India has a native drama which in its ramifications is strongly reminiscent of certain European nations; thus we find traces of moralities, miracles, farces and puppet plays. Today in such centers as Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, there are forms which are the counterpart of American and European modern types—social plays, melodramas, burlesques, and problem plays.

In a subsequent chapter we feel obliged to disclaim a belief in the existence of Greek theaters built on the borders of India by the cultured and wealthy Greeks who formed part of the retinue of Alexander the Great on his campaigns, nor can we accept the theory that Aristotle's *Poetics* had a direct influence upon the construction of Indian plays; we should not however be understood as denying absolutely that Greek art had any appreciable influence on Indian art and science. Scholars agree in general terms that the artists of Greece influenced India in its coinage, its architecture, its astronomical science, its mythology. The controversy is waged over details. For example, there is an Indian word *Yavana* which is re-

garded as the Sanskrit equivalent of the Greek word for *Ionian*. The Sanskrit word *Yavanika* means according to certain Orientalists, "The Greek Curtain"; this word is supposed to furnish proof that Greek drama was the creative source of Indian drama. The discussion regarding this curtain is too technical to permit quotation here; we may, however, refer to our chapter on the Greek Theater where the absence of a curtain in that theater is emphasized; it is difficult to understand how India could have borrowed a "Greek Curtain" which never existed.

Specific traces of Greek influence on Indian science and art are abundant and unmistakable. The astronomy of the Brahmans is greatly indebted to Greece; in the sculpture of northern India the well-known Greek face and clear-cut profile are constantly evident in the Buddhist statuary of the older period; this influence is most notable in the northwestern portions of India where Greek settlers were most numerous. A striking proof of the real existence of this influence in northwest India is the fact that as we move farther eastward beyond the borders of the Hellenic settlements the Greek profiles and faces gradually disappear and a new style of outline of the human form takes their place. Upon the whole, Greek art exerted an abiding influence on the art of India; this influence may be traced as late as the 12th century of the Christian era in the profiles on the temple at Kanarak.

Until recently writers on China have emphasized the aloofness of the Chinese from Western civilization. Even so recent a work as that of [1] Mantzius speaks of the hatred of the Chinese for every foreign element, for everything contrary to the traditions of their own country. Several other writers refer to the significance of the Chinese efforts to avoid differentiation in the appearance of individuals and to adopt a costume which will conceal so far as possible the outlines of the human form. This attempt at uniformity has had a direct bearing upon Chinese art; to the western connoisseur the individuality of the

[1] A History of Theatrical Art, Karl Mantzius. London, Duckworth & Co. 1903.

artist is one of his greatest charms: a Beethoven and a Tschaikowsky symphony; a Rembrandt and a Rubens painting; a Christopher Wren and a Bulfinch building; an Ibsen and a Maeterlinck play; the Occidental critic takes keen delight in comparing these works of art, in noting their resemblances and their differences. Mantzius says that "it is probably difficult, even to a Chinese, to distinguish one master from the other". This is not a reflection upon the quality of Chinese art, *per se;* it is simply a comment upon the absence of individuality in that art. All this bears upon our study of drama. Chinese plays lack the differentiation which we find for instance in Greek tragedy; the work of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides differs so markedly in style and in intellectual content that no scholar could possibly attribute the work of any one of these writers to either of the other two. Mantzius goes so far as to say that "Chinese literature does not contain any drama with a sufficiently individual stamp to raise it to our standard of genuine art"; it is not without significance that in the chapter which he devotes to the Chinese theater he never mentions the name of a Chinese dramatist, although he quotes from several plays by title. It is equally significant that two writers on Chinese life and customs, [1] Nieuhof and [2] Timkowsky (quoted by Mantzius) speak of the privilege extended by Chinese actors to guests to make their own choice of plays for an entertainment; in both cases the selection is made from the text of a book of plays or from a list of titles rather than from a preference for any particular author.

In China as in India and Japan we find a conflict raging between the old drama and the new. Societies of amateurs are producing western plays in the occidental manner. Professor Hughes thinks that whatever may happen in the theaters of the great cities of China, the rural sections of the country will for a considerable period fail to respond to the modern realistic movement.

[1] Nieuhof: An Embassy from the East India Company of the United Provinces. 1669.

[2] E. F. Timkowsky: Travels of the Russian Mission. 1827.

There is a dispute between the partisans of India and those of China as to which country was the first to cultivate drama; one set of scholars regards India as the first nation in the world to foster theatrical art; the Chinese make the extraordinary claim of a dramatic activity existing as far back as 2000 years B. C. The partisans of Japan make no claim to a long dramatic history; they do not attempt to go beyond the fourteenth century of the Christian era for traces of serious cultivation of the Japanese theater. Hughes, in his *The Story of the Theatre*, says that "Japanese drama is of approximately the same age as English drama"; we are nevertheless obliged to assume that in Japan as in other countries there was a long period stretching back into prehistoric times during which various forms of primitive drama—religious dances, ballad singing, puppet plays were in vogue.

When we approach Japanese drama we are at once impressed by its close resemblance both to that of China and to the European religious plays of the Middle Ages. We must be on our guard against the tendency to attribute resemblances in art to imitation direct or indirect. It is, of course, undeniable that one art may serve as model for another; the chapter in which reference is made to the traces of Greek drama in the Roman dramatists is conclusive; the influence of Greek art upon that of India is unquestionable. However, an extreme type of scholar, bent solely on tracing influences finally loses its critical balance and begins to discover them everywhere. It is certain as any literary inference can possibly be, that the resemblances between the European religious plays of the Middle Ages and the early Japanese religious plays are merely the product of the human mind working in different parts of the world on the same problem and producing substantially identical results. It is of course possible that Japan, lying so close geographically to China, may have imported some of the details of the Chinese temple-play productions, but Mantzius, at least, doubts that such an influence was exerted. In the India of today there are wholesome signs of a genuine native activity in playwriting; quite as significant is

the visit which a troupe of native Indian actors recently made to London. There are valid reasons for supposing that in the near future India will create a native drama presented by native actors; it is as yet too early to determine the extent of the permanent influence which the Occident is destined to exert on this new drama. At present the new Indian drama and theater show a strange admixture; the realistic and the mystical meet; the traditional style of acting appears side by side with the snappy methods of the invading western theaters. All this will work itself out in time; the new Indian theater is still in the formative stage.

Chapter XXIV

INDIAN DRAMA

No European nation has developed so elaborate a system of dramatic criticism as that of the Hindus. From Greece there has come down to us the *Poetics* of Aristotle; although this is the only extant dramatic critical treatise dating from the classical period, there are indications in Aristotle that there were other critical writings in his day and that he had read and estimated their value during the composition of his own *Poetics*. An examination of the *Ars Poetica* of Horace, the Roman poet of the first century B. C., discloses the important fact that some of the critical rules which he lays down in that work are not found in the *Poetics;* the logical inference is that some of the independent Greek treatises of about the time of Aristotle and subsequent periods had either survived until the time of Horace or had at least left an indelible impression upon traditional dramatic criticism.

When however we take up the study of Indian dramatic criticism we are amazed at the number and the minuteness of the native works on this subject. For many centuries Indian scholars devoted themselves to the interpretation of the masterpieces of their country, yet we are disappointed when we look for a systematic and orderly chronological presentation of the results of their study. It is at first sight a disconcerting thing that Hindu scholars are but slightly interested in purely historical studies; profound as students of philosophy they are indifferent to merely historical occurrences. As Mantzius puts it in his *History of Theatrical Art*, "The enigma of creation was the only historical problem that interested them, and as to the future, it was the problem of future existence; no events, either past or present, appeared worthy of note, since

eternal unalterable rest was the common goal of all aspirations."

Authorities differ regarding the date of the origin of Indian drama; [1] some scholars trace it to primitive open air festivals dating as far back as two thousand years before the Christian era; others more definitely date the beginnings as contemporary with Greek drama, or at least as early as the fifth century, B. C., the period of the three great Greek tragedians, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides; others place it somewhat later, the third century B. C. The Hindus themselves have a legend which professes to give the origin of the drama of their country. According to this legend the god Brahma took from the Vedas the rules of dramatic art and handed them over to the seer Bharata who reduced them to a system and arranged them in the form of a collection of brief statements or precepts; this inspired dramatic treatise or law-book of Bharata continued to be the standard authority of all subsequent aesthetic and didactic works of Indian scholars in the field of dramatic composition. In modern times doubt has been expressed regarding the existence of this treatise of Bharata; it is claimed that the elaborate code of dramatic rules which has come down to us under his name was not his work but was composed little by little at different periods as the need of such rules developed, or as the knowledge of dramatic criticism widened.

In their search for the beginning of Indian drama certain scholars have not hesitated to ascribe it to the Greeks. According to these writers we may trace in early Indian drama a close resemblance to the New Attic Comedy; in both, for instance, we find recurring stock characters. A further resemblance is the exodus of all the characters either singly or in a body at the end of the play. A third similarity is the employment of a prologue. Other scholars take exception to this attempt to explain similarities as proof of transference from Greek to Indian drama; the similarity may have originated independently. It is claimed by the objectors that every apparent or real resem-

[1] J. L. Klein: Geschichte des Dramas. Leipzig. 1865-1886.

blance between the two dramas may be explained in a way which nullifies the theory of any connection. "How could there possibly be any geographical or literary contact between countries as far apart as Greece and India?" ask the objectors. "It is easily explained", is the reply: "When Alexander the Great made his campaigns into the East he was accompanied by many literary celebrities and men of high social standing; these cultured Greeks erected theaters in which were brought out plays in their native tongue; the influence of these plays extended over the borders into India and had a marked influence." "Mere supposition", is the answer of the objectors: "we have no evidence whatever of the existence of Greek theaters on the borders of India; we do not need to seek in Greece or in any other foreign country the origin of Indian drama; that drama is as capable of a purely native origin as was Greek drama itself."

Not content with simply denying a Greek origin, leading Sanskrit scholars are today taking a very aggressive attitude and are asserting that the character of Indian drama is entirely different from that of the Greeks. (The lack in India of the mask, so characteristic of the drama of Greece, is one of the arguments which these dissenters adduce). Another claim far more absurd than that of a Greek origin is the attempt to show that Aristotle's *Poetics* has had a marked influence upon the drama and the dramatic criticism of India. Great as has been the influence of the *Poetics* upon the drama and the critical theories of western Europe from the Renaissance to the present, it taxes our credulity to ask us to believe that this famous book found its way over into India; what seem to be derivatives from the *Poetics* are almost certainly mere resemblances. Modern critical theory is, upon the whole, distinctly opposed to any attempt to find a Greek origin for Indian drama and Indian critical dramatic theories.

The drama of India probably had its origin in the religious worship of Rama and other deities. As we have seen in other chapters modern critics are now and then inclined to question the distinctly religious origin of early drama, at least so far as

the worship of a definite divinity is concerned. For our present purpose, however, we may accept the view still generally held that primitive drama, like the mediæval, had its origin in religious ritual and was performed only on solemn occasions and as part of the worship of a divinity.

The most important elements of the early Indian plays were dance, song, music. Here we have a close parallel to the origin of Greek drama in the songs and dances in honor of the god Dionysus. [1] A striking argument in favor of the theory that Indian drama originated in song and dance is the fact that the native words for "actor", "play", "the art of drama", are all derived from a root meaning "to dance." We know that dance, song and instrumental music were employed at an early time in sacrifices for religious festivals. The earliest theoretical treatises on dramatic art originated in the necessity which soon manifested itself of setting down in systematic written form the religious ritual in which song and dance were employed. The earliest Indian performances were given before audiences which had gathered for a religious rite; the worshippers at these gatherings indulged in all sorts of merriment; not only were song, dance and music employed but wrestling matches, juggling, cockfights, and other contests formed part of the programme. These entertainments finally assumed so boisterous a form that the Buddhist monks were forbidden to attend. Here we have a parallel to the religious performances of the Middle Ages.[2] We know that gradually there crept into the religious service comic elements so broad that the church was compelled to forbid the clergy to take part or even to attend, and finally to abandon the mysteries to the secular elements of the community.

Referring once more to the modern controversy regarding the origin of Indian drama, it should be stated that although there is general agreement that it originated in dance, it is not unanimously admitted that this dance was part of a religious service. Mantzius asserts that, in spite of the denials

[1] Mantzius: A History of Theatrical Art, Vol. I, page 62.
[2] Pollard: English Miracle Plays. Oxford. Introduction, xxiv.

made by famous scholars, Indian drama was originally connected with divine worship; he claims that as early as the time of the Vedas singing and dancing were an essential part of that worship. Everywhere in the oldest Indian literature dancing is mentioned as an important part of the religious service; even today at every pagoda in that country there is an official who executes a solemn dance as a preliminary to all native festivals.

Indian drama may be divided into three periods: (A) From the beginning to the eleventh century A. D. This is known as the Classical Period. The most famous extant plays of this period are *Sakuntala* (or *Shakuntala*) and *The Toy Cart*. (B) From the eleventh to the fourteenth century, the Period of Decline. During this period there was a continuous series of Mohammedan invasions of India. The general characteristics of this period are an excess of narrative and description, an affected and over-elaborate style. (C) From the fourteenth century on. This is known as the Period of Decay.

In our endeavor in this Story of the Drama to ascertain the facts regarding famous dramatists we have frequently encountered baffling contradictory statements which have left us uncertain of the exact year of the birth or the death of certain of these men; yet these discrepancies are utterly insignificant compared with those which confront us when we take up the biography of Kalidasa, the celebrated author of *Sakuntala*. Famous throughout the whole literary world though he was, we discover a variation of eleven hundred years in the dates assigned to him by scholars; at one extreme we find his birth placed in the first century B. C.; at the other in the eleventh century A. D. Mantzius endeavors to compromise by placing him somewhat vaguely in the fifth or sixth century of the Christian Era. The writer of the article in the new *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says that modern scholars as a whole are inclined to estimate his period in the last quarter of the fourth century of the Christian Era (about 375 A. D.). There are still others who put him as late as the sixth century.

Indian writers speak proudly of the "Nine Gems" of dra-

matic genius which their country has produced. To Kalidasa they assign the place of supreme brilliancy; in the judgment of some critics his genius outshines that of all the poets of the entire Orient. The outer world which knows him only by his *Sakuntala* thinks of him simply as a supreme dramatist; in his own country he is distinguished also as an epic and lyric poet. His *Sakuntala* is the most famous of the three plays which he is known to have written.

One of the great dates in the annals of literary criticism is the year 1789, the year in which Sir William Jones published an English translation of the *Sakuntala*. Two years later the Germans became acquainted with the play through the translation of George Foster (1791). The literary world was aroused to an unbounded enthusiasm by the revelation of a new and unexplored field of poetry. Herder and Goethe praised the play in the warmest terms, Vienna even produced a Sakuntala ballet.

Technically the *Sakuntala* is an heroic love comedy in seven acts; it draws its plot from the first book of the great Sanskrit epic poem the *Mahabharata*. The English reader can easily gain access to this lovely idyll in the English translation of Professor Arthur W. Ryder in Everyman's Library.

The Indian play which ranks next in general European reputation to the *Sakuntala* is *The Toy Cart*. We note in the wide variations of dates assigned to this play the usual uncertainty due to the absence of historical records in that country. Professor Windisch of Leipzig, the famous Sanskrit authority, regarded this play as the oldest Indian drama. It was assigned to as remote a period as the second century of the Christian Era; nearly all recent scholars fix the date of the play as somewhat later than the time of Kalidasa. The author of the play is unknown; it has been credited to King Sudraka; perhaps the king wrote it, possibly one of the poets attached to his court deserves the credit of its authorship. The play is a comedy of bourgeois life recounting the courtship and marriage of an impoverished Brahmin and a rich courtesan. In explanation of this surprising anomaly it should be said that Indian

courtesans were by no means subjected to the social ostracism which prevails in modern times.

The number of Indian plays which have come down to us from these many centuries is astonishingly small; in 1827 it was not much over sixty; even as late as 1906 careful investigation had brought to light not many more than five hundred dramas in the native Sanskrit language; to these should be added, however, a number in various Indian vernaculars.

Indian dramatic compositions fall under two chief classes: (A) Rupakas,—Higher Drama; (B) Uparupakas,—Lower Drama. Both these words come from the Sanskrit word *rupa; rupa* is the general designation for dramatic poetry. The first class,—Rupaka, is subdivided into ten species; the second class,—Uparupaka, into eighteen classes. This large number of subdivisions is a striking illustration of the love of Indian theorists for minute classification. The differences are insignificant and are based upon details which are of little importance; it will however repay us to consider somewhat fully the highest of the ten species of the Rupaka; we shall find some interesting resemblances to Greek drama.

The highest division of the Rupaka is the Nataka; a representative play of the Nataka is the famous *Sakuntala* of Kalidasa. In a Nataka the characters must be distinguished or of high rank,—a deity, a demigod, a prince, or a hero. Here we find a close parallel with Greek drama. The only permissible themes are love or heroism; this is a distinct departure from the Greek usage. Never in the plays of Aeschylus or Sophocles did normal love of the sexes form the leading theme; in Euripides, however, wifely love is treated in the *Alcestis*, and abnormal passion in the infatuation of Phædra for her stepson Hippolytus. The material for a Nataka must invariably be taken from mythology or from history,—another striking parallel with Greek drama, although Greek tragic themes were prevailingly taken from mythology rather than from history; an example of a subject taken by a Greek tragic writer from history is the *Persae* of Aeschylus. One Indian theorist would permit an invented plot or a combination of

such a plot with mythological or historical material. In a Nataka there must be a single dominant passion; in thus limiting the treatment we again note a close resemblance to Greek drama; the Greek tragedian emphasized but one phase of character in his heroes and his heroines, and subordinated all other elements of character to this single passion; in reading of Achilles we think only of his "wrath"; we think chiefly of the "stubbornness" of Prometheus, the "ferocity" of Medea, the "versatility" of Ulysses. We must wait for the coming of the Romantic type of drama before we find the dramatist treating his heroes or heroines as complex beings of many emotions; the romantic Hernani of Victor Hugo's famous play is swayed by a variety of passions,—love, revenge, hatred, jealousy. The treatment of a Nataka must be simple; no episodes may be introduced, no sub-plots are admissible; here again we have a close parallel with Greek drama, which excluded sub-plots. The time of action of a Nataka must not, according to the older theorists, exceed one day; once more we have a marked similarity to the practice of the Greek dramatists who usually limited the action to about twenty-four hours. There are indications that the Indian dramatists ultimately chafed under this restriction of time precisely as Corneille in the seventeenth century felt himself hampered by a similar limitation; accordingly we find later theorists permitting the action of a plot to extend through several days or even to a year. The ending of a Nataka could never under any conditions be sad; such an ending was positively forbidden in all kinds of Indian dramas. Here we have a marked contrast; a Greek tragedy, both in practice and by theory, had a sad ending.

From the induction of an Indian play we may gain an insight into the purpose of these plays. "What", inquires the manager of an actor, "are the qualities which the virtuous, the wise, the venerable, the learned, and the Brahmins require in a drama?" The actor replies, "Profound exposition of the various passions, pleasant interchange of mutual affection, loftiness of character, delicate expression of desire, a sur-

prising story, and elegant language." The list of excluded scenes is far wider than murders and the gruesome; among the tabooed actions are kissing, eating, sleeping, bathing, scratching, the marriage ceremony and marital infidelity; the American moving picture magnate would have a hard time making a living in India. Occasional violations of the rule regarding excluded topics are found among the later writers. Indian drama rarely contains long soliloquies, although short monologues are by no means rare; even the prologue, which is a regular feature of an Indian drama, is divided between two persons. In Indian drama as in Greek tragedy we find Fate playing a powerful rôle; Indian plays occasionally represent Fate as superior not only to mortals, but to the gods themselves; similarly, in Greek tragedy even Zeus, the king of the gods, is subject to the decrees of Destiny or Fate.

The Indian dramatists portray in a masterly way the highest forms of pathos blended with emotion.

Indian drama is by no means lacking in humor. Critics tell us that the comic element is not of the vulgar kind, such as we find in our so-called comic movies; rather is it, they say, dainty and delicate even though the play be professedly comic. We cannot help wondering whether these critics place the soliloquies of the clown in *Sakuntala* under the head of "dainty and delicate humor"; this character with his swear words and his proverbs,—"There's a new pimple growing on the old boil", seems made to order for a position in a modern traveling circus. The critics make a distinction between wit and humor; humor they find in Indian drama, but wit, at least as it is understood in European countries, is almost lacking. Indian wit seems to consist largely of a constant play on words.

The chief excellence of Indian drama lies in its supreme poetic quality. The higher type, at least, is never forgetful of its religious origin.

The Indian dramatists are not as solicitous about developing a logical plot as Aristotle and modern theorists require; their drama frequently consists of a series of pictures or epic scenes but loosely connected with one another. Mantzius thus

sums up his criticism of this drama: "In spite of the charm which the best Indian plays insensibly exercise on first acquaintance on a receptive mind, it cannot be denied that all that is known to us of Indian dramatic literature does not contain a single work fraught with that mighty power, which by its passion, its depth of thought and profound knowledge of human nature irresistibly carries us away and compels our veneration. The Indian drama breathes a gentle grace, which produces a situation of quiet ease in the reader or spectator, and its passion seldom goes beyond a sensual, somewhat indolent love, which derives its greatest attraction from the description of nature in which it is framed."

In their structure Indian plays differ markedly from Greek plays. A Greek drama was divided technically into Prologue, Parodos, Episodes, Stasima, and Exodus. The act division did not come into use until after the time of Euripides, 405 B. C., but before the time of Horace, first century B. C.. Indian drama adopted the act division; in a Nataka the minimum number permissible was five, the maximum ten. Among the subdivisions of the second class of Indian drama, the Uparupaka, we find plays containing 4, 5, 7, 8, or 9 acts.

A striking feature of Indian drama is the fact that Indian plays contain two different languages, Sanskrit and Prakrit. Strictly speaking, Prakrit is a weakened, softened form of Sanskrit. The greater part of a play, if it were produced in northern India, consisted of classical Sanskrit. By 30 B. C. Sanskrit had ceased to be a language spoken by the common people; it continued, however, as the classical, the learned, the sacred and court form of speech of the Brahmins. In an Indian play the gods, the heroes, and the chief characters spoke in classical Sanskrit, the minor male characters and the females of the play employed the popular Prakrit. The result of this mixture of speech was that the large majority of the audience were unable to understand at least a portion of the play. In every audience there was an inner circle within the greater one; only this inner group, made up of learned men, could feel the full effect of the play; the great majority could not

fully understand the sentiment of the speakers; at the most they could merely catch the drift of the plot from the actions of the characters and from a general acquaintance with the legends or stories thus represented.

Prakrit was divided into seven or eight dialects; each of these would be fully intelligible only to a section of the audience. Bearing in mind that as many as eight different Prakrit dialects might be employed in the same play and that sometimes one of the characters employed two different vernaculars,—one in prose, the other in verse, we can form an idea not only of the difficulty which an Indian audience found in understanding a play, but of the enormous strain laid upon the actors who were obliged to familiarize themselves with all these various forms of the spoken language.

The Indian theorists drew up a very elaborate set of rules to be observed by the actors; so minutely did they develop their theories that they enumerate the various parts of the body, the movements and gestures appropriate to each and the significance of each gesture. A number of rules are laid down regarding the use of the eyebrows, the nose, the cheeks, the lips, the chin, and the neck. Special rules are given for the gestures of the hand; to denote a fan, the actor must stretch out the four fingers closely joined while the thumb is bent; if the fingers are separated and the hand shaken, it indicates that the character has seen a fire break out; this gesture might also indicate a downpour of rain; if the ring finger is bent it indicates that the person is alighting from a carriage or dismounting from a horse or is entering a house; no less than twenty-four positions of the hand and thirteen different combinations of outstretched and closed fingers were described. Directions were also given for the movement of the feet, the various steps and strides and the corresponding action of the hands. Women of the lower classes indicated cold and rain by crouching down, contracting the body, making their lips tremble and their teeth chatter. To mark darkness the actors dragged their feet across the stage and groped with their hands. To depict wading into water the garments were raised high. To show

that the water was very deep, the hands were outstretched. These elaborate gestures and movements were designed to lessen the difficulties caused by the scanty scenic apparatus and the mixture of dialects in the spoken word. The symbolic gestures were carefully studied, and were taught by a staff of skilled teachers; European spectators would, of course, find themselves unable to interpret all these elaborate symbolic gestures.

Although there was, theoretically, a very large variety of Indian characters (theorists distinguished 384 female types), the actors did not have as difficult a task in differentiating rôles as the vast number of types might indicate; within the principal categories, such as heroes, lovers, comic persons, the individuals were distinguished by little more than outward indications. The Indian actor was, therefore, not obliged to make a profound study of human nature, but he was held to a high degree of technical skill and a perfect mastery of the various dialects of his native country.

Female rôles were performed by women; there were however some exceptions; the rôles of old and ugly women were sometimes taken by men.

The Indians laid great stress on the professional training of their actors. The training combined theory with practice; the apprentices were compelled to master textbooks containing a vast number of rules; not only must they become proficient in the various dialects of their country and the complicated system of symbolic gestures but they received a thorough training in singing and dancing that they might worthily portray the musical elements of a dramatic performance.

The costumes in an Indian performance were expensive and very elaborate. The garments harmonized with the character portrayed. We find a tendency on the part of actors playing certain rôles to appear in exceedingly costly dress. Care was taken to distinguish the various classes of citizens. Three kinds of costumes were recognized by theorists, uncolored, many colored, and dirt colored. Elaborate rules defined the stage conduct of the actors who wore the various stage attires. Rules also prescribed how the actor must wear his hair and

his beard; insane persons had dishevelled hair; maidens from a certain part of India had curly hair; those from another part wore their hair high; those from still another part wore two braids or tresses. These varieties of head dress indicated to the audience without further explanation the part of India from which the characters were supposed to come.

Indian plays were produced only on special occasions, mostly of a public character, and particularly at seasons intimately connected with a divinity. Here again we find a close parallel to dramatic performances at Athens. In India plays were always written for a particular performance; in some instances, however, they were reproduced.

Until the nineteenth century there was no permanent and professional theater; the performances took place in temples or palaces or a suitable hall. There were also buildings which might be used for dramatic purposes, but they were on occasion also employed for dances and musical performances. The theorists have handed down detailed descriptions of these buildings; an old work says: [1] "The room in which dances are performed must be spacious and beautifully decorated. The canvas-roofed hall must be provided with richly ornamented pillars, and adorned all over with garlands of flowers. The master of the house is seated in the middle of the hall on an elevated throne; on his right hand great dignitaries are placed, on his left his nearest relations, and behind them state or domestic officers. Female attendants with fans and screens are grouped round the governor, while staff-bearers, who maintain order, and armed guards, occupy the posts allotted to them. When all are seated, the artists enter and sing some songs, after which the first dancing girl appears from behind a curtain, bows to the assembly, throws flowers to the spectators, and begins dancing." In very early times caverns were used for dramatic representations; this is proved by an inscription (dating from about the second century B. C.) which was found in such a cavern.

In our study of the Greek theater we found it a disputed question whether or not there was a stage during the classical

[1] Quoted by Mantzius, I, 76.

period. No such question confronts us in studying the Indian drama; there certainly was a stage in an Indian theater. When a performance was given in a palace or a hall, the stage must have been hurriedly constructed for the occasion; at such performances, at least during the period of the classical drama, it consisted merely of a raised platform at the back of the hall without a front curtain and without any decoration except a bit of drapery which formed the background. When, however, we reach the period of regular theaters, we find elaborate details regarding the auditorium, and we are told that the stage of these regular buildings was adorned with paintings and reliefs. We read that the Indian stage represented several different places at once; certain authorities have attempted to explain this by assuming that it was sometimes divided into two compartments, one of which represented the inside of a house, the other the yard in front of it. Even in modern European plays it is by no means uncommon to have a partition in the middle of the stage, dividing the interior of a house from the outside, or separating one room from another.

Though the Indian theater had a curtain it was not placed at the front of the stage, but rather at the back, to conceal the performers until it was time for them to appear. The curtain in an Indian theater simply shut off from the audience the dressing room of the actors; we have spoken of certain scenes that were not tolerated on the stage itself; some of these were supposed to be acted behind the curtain in the dressing room; they often called for an accompaniment of loud noise; these sounds were made behind the curtain and were heard by the audience, who were to imagine the scenes; among the sounds were tumults, uproars, and the voices of the gods and supernatural beings.

Indian scenery was simple; the stage settings and scenic apparatus were very scanty. The curtain at the back of the stage remained unchanged throughout the entire play. Very little attention was paid to stage properties; they were few and simple. We are told that monsters with many arms and the head of an ape, a horse or an ox, were made of clay or wood

and covered with a fabric of some kind. Weapons were not made of genuine metal; bamboo or some other material was employed for this purpose. Blows were merely simulated, never really inflicted. It is likely that the actions of entering a room, shutting doors, etc. were merely imitated by the actors as in Chinese drama. It is very significant that in the theoretical works although we have voluminous and detailed instructions in regard to acting we have no directions whatever concerning scenic decorations.

There are indications that some of the Indian companies had a collection of stock plays with standing rôles such as were characteristic of the Italian *commedia dell'arte.*

We have already shown the difficulty which an Indian audience found in understanding their plays. One of the old theorists makes clear to us the exacting demands on a spectator at an Indian play; he tells us that the ideal spectator "must be mentally keen, capable of testing and of weighing; he must share the joys and sorrows of the actors on the stage." In an Indian audience there would be found three classes of auditors,—the good, the bad, and the medium; "The ultimate decision", he tells us, "rested not with the audience but with the dramatic judges" (Another parallel with an Athenian dramatic performance); "these judges must possess all necessary and possible virtues."

An Indian audience expressed its pleasure and its dissatisfaction with great freedom; they laughed, they cried out, they stood up in their places and gesticulated in approval and disapproval. We find in Indian dramas frequent assurances that the audiences were well versed in knowledge of the drama; in classical plays it was assumed that the audience was made up of educated persons; in fact, the giver of the performance was frequently a prince or some other distinguished person; doubtless the general public, also, had a certain amount of knowledge of the technique of drama.

We find what seems to be an irreconcilable contradiction among Indian authorities regarding the social condition of actors. Some of the authorities assure us that they were highly

esteemed; that among them were included men of the highest caste (the Brahmins) and the wealthy; others, however, tell us that actors were not enrolled among the castes; that they were outside like swine, serpents and reptiles; one of the Indian names for actors means a person of bad character. In a statement dating from the seventh century we read: "butchers, fishers, actors, hangmen and scavengers are turned out of the town and shown a place where they may live; when entering or leaving a village they must keep to the left of the road." Modern authorities also are divided in their opinions regarding the social position of actors in India. One of these authorities says that they are descendants of the original wandering singers, dancers, and mimic actors, and that they, like their predecessors, are not highly regarded; another modern authority asserts that in India they were never classed with vagabonds, servants and lackeys, as they were in China and that they were never under the ban of religion as they were in Christian lands. Mantzius seeks to solve the difficulty by assuming that there were two classes of actors in India; that one class was made up of finely bred and well trained men who lived in the large cities, acted in high grade classical dramas at court, were on intimate terms with poets and philosophers, and were welcomed at court. This theory finds support in the prologues of Indian plays where the actor sometimes speaks of the poet as his personal friend; we know that the poets whom the actors mention as their personal friends were regarded as worthy of the society and friendship of kings and philosophers. Mantzius assumes that there was another class of actors, poverty-stricken vagabonds, singers, jugglers, dancers, who roamed from village to village playing indecent farces; the moral character of these strolling actors was nearly as bad as that of their plays and they were shunned by respectable people who refused to walk on the same side of the road with them and were afraid of brushing against them as though they were unclean beasts.

CHAPTER XXV

CHINESE DRAMA

In dealing with the oriental nations we are obliged to reckon by millenniums, whereas we estimate occidental civilizations by centuries. We fancy that we are speaking of very ancient times when we discuss the Attic dramatists of the fifth century B. C.; but historians tell us that Chinese drama goes back 2000 years before the Christian era. They cannot, it is true, adduce any real plays earlier than the sixth century of our era,—a span of 2600 years between the alleged beginning of this drama and the first tangible accomplishment, but we are reminded once more of the old adage that poetry and literature are not synonymous terms; drama and dramatic literature are not identical. The wonder is not that Chinese drama began as early (or as late) as 2000 B. C., but that twenty-six hundred years passed before we find any traces of dramatic literature. The Greeks have a better dramatic record than the Chinese; as early as four hundred and fifty years before the Christian era they had brought their dramatic literature to the acme of its perfection; it was eleven hundred years after the bloom of Greek drama before China achieved even a rudimentary literary play. These facts, so creditable to the Greeks, should be kept in mind when we are told of the great antiquity of the oriental civilizations as compared with that of European states.

When we speak of Chinese drama as originating as early as 2000 B. C. we should not be understood as claiming that what we call legitimate drama found its way to the stage at that early period; actual production seems to have originated many centuries later if we may judge from the fact that the earliest extant plays (sixth century of the Christian era) are very crude in technique.

Various opinions are held regarding the specific origin of Chinese drama; some scholars attribute it to the Tartars; others give the credit to certain emperors; we are even told the names and the dates of the rulers to whom the origin is personally credited. This theory of a personal imperial invention of drama deserves little credence; great and powerful though a Chinese emperor may have been he could not have created by edict or even by example so great a movement.

Not only is the originator of Chinese drama unknown (and unknowable) but even the date of origin; we have seen that some scholars trace it back as far as two thousand years before the Christian Era; others to the ninth century B. C.; some place the beginning during the reigns of various emperors in the Christian Era; of one, for example, who was on the throne about 580 A. D.; of another, somewhat later, who reigned 720 A. D. Scholars are practically agreed that the real origin of Chinese drama, like the drama of so many other ancient civilizations, was religious; more specifically they trace it back to ancestor worship combined with religious dancing; accompanying this worship were, it is believed, acrobatic performances and clowning which provided entertainments for the emperors under whose patronage they were given.

As far back as we can trace their history we find the Chinese interested in musical and spectacular effects; their earliest dramatic efforts were produced in temples and palaces, long before regular playhouses were even imagined. Chinese drama, accordingly, seems to have arisen from a union of dance and song; this dance was probably pantomimic; these dances continue to this day in China side by side with a more advanced form of drama which had a similar origin. Many of these pantomimic dances were originally of a symbolic nature; they had reference to the harvest, to war or to peace; one very ancient dance of this kind symbolized the conquest of China by its foe. There are to this day features of the drama which seem to support the claim that it had its origin in religious worship; for example, we still find attached to every important Chinese temple a stage consisting of a wooden platform in front of

the temple; at religious festivals in China this stage is still used for dramatic performances by strolling actors. Still another indication of religious origin is the constant appearance in modern dramas, even when treating of everyday events, of supernatural beings who perform exactly the rôle of the old Greek *deus ex machina.*

Historians who trace a more specific beginning of Chinese drama find it during the reign of two great dynasties,—the Tang of the eighth century A.D. and the Yuan (1280-1368 A.D.); under the former we find for the first time a professional drama; under the second, drama in a well developed form.

Every investigator of drama becomes accustomed to hearing Chinese actors called "Students of the Pear Garden"; a poetic name originating in a poetic fact. It seems attested that an emperor by the name of Ming-Huang of the Tang Dynasty organized an extensive troupe of actors numbering, some say, three hundred persons and trained them himself, assigning as their place of rehearsal one of his private gardens. The essential fact in this narrative is that in the eighth century A.D. Chinese drama enjoyed royal favor, broadened beyond its original function as a purely religious observance, and took on an artistic form.

Scholars attribute a newer and still higher form to the Mongol emperors of the Yuan Dynasty (1280-1368). The great difficulty with which drama had previously contended was that the upper classes had not taken it seriously because it was composed in the vernacular,—the language of the common people; scholars and poets had disdained to employ this style of speech in their own literary work and had used exclusively the classical language, a form markedly different from the vernacular. Drama had to face a serious difficulty; those who could write polished drama scorned to reduce it to the vernacular and those who could compose in the vernacular lacked the culture necessary for the production of a refined type of drama. It is on record that the Mongol Yuan emperors cleared their court of the scholastic retinue and thereby reduced them

to the humiliation of earning a living by composing plays and novels in a vernacular which the common people could read and understand.

At first in China, as in Greece, Rome, India, and other countries, plays were acted only at festivals and on solemn occasions. The actors in these primitive dramas were amateurs; the plays were not brought out in buildings devoted exclusively to dramatic performances, but on a temporary platform consisting simply of a wooden floor supported by posts.

The historian of the Chinese theater finds it necessary to study the newest literature on China if he desires to keep abreast of the times. Even so recent a work as the excellent *History of Theatrical Art*, by Karl Mantzius, is not in touch with present dramatic conditions in China when it says that "even private playhouses are of quite exceptional occurrence, and only found in towns of considerable size." The fact is that the whole theatrical situation in China is today undergoing a revolution under the influence of the western spirit; every Chinese city of considerable size has its own theater,—Peking (Peiping) has no less than thirty legitimate theaters; even the villages have the advantage of the visits of road companies. Chinese amateur organizations are producing European plays; leading actors are deserting the old style Chinese theaters for the newer, westernized structures, with modern stages, modern scenery, modern lighting. Conservatives are looking askance at the new movement; they are wondering how it will affect the venerable Chinese tradition; already, according to these critics, the Chinese theater has begun to lose some of its historic characteristics, it is becoming a feeble imitator of the western theater and its methods.

Historians who divide Chinese drama into definite periods admit frankly that such divisions are purely arbitrary; it is noticeable, however, that they usually begin with the famous Ming-Huang of the Tang Dynasty, and take as a specific starting point the year 720 A.D. which fixes the time of his reign. Beginning with that date some critics divide the history of Chinese drama into three periods, others into four. As a

sample division we may cite the following:— I (720-907 A. D.) The plays of this epoch are largely heroic dramas. II (960-1119): During this era appears a character peculiar to Chinese drama,—an actor who sings certain parts of his rôle. III (1125-1367): The best known age of Chinese drama; from it we have nearly 600 plays. IV (1368-1644): The Ming Dynasty. Characteristic of the drama of this period are farcical dialogue and love intrigues. The student will find it profitable to compare this division into four periods with that of three by Mr. Allan R. Priest, Curator of Far Eastern Art, of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, as given in the new edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica.* I, from the reign of Ming-Huang (A. D. 720) to the fall of the Tang Dynasty. II, from the beginning of the Sung Dynasty to the close of the reign of Hui-Tsung. III, from the reign of the Tartars of North China through the Mongolian Yuan Dynasty. We are here interested in the various dynasties only in so far as they are connected with our theme,—the Chinese theater and Chinese drama. Three of these dynasties,—the Mongol (or Yuan), the Ming and the Manchu are so frequently mentioned in works on drama that they call for brief treatment in this place.

The Mongol Dynasty (1280-1368 A.D.), often designated by its official name, the Yuan Dynasty, lasted only 88 years. It began in 1280 when the great Mongol conqueror, Khublai, became emperor of all China; his reign was brilliant and under his administration the power of the Mongols reached its height. Of especial interest to us is the fact that the novel and the drama first became of importance under his patronage.

Every reader of Eugene O'Neill's *Marco Millions* has a keen interest in this Yuan Dynasty for it was under the régime of the Mongols that western Europeans first found their way into China, or "Cathay" as they designated it. Among the merchants who ventured abroad on new commercial ventures were Nicolo and Maffeo Polo and Nicolo's son, the famous Marco Polo. For several years Marco was engaged in the service of the great Khublai; after leaving his employ he took part in military affairs and was taken prisoner in a

naval battle between the fleets of Genoa and Venice. While in prison in Genoa, Marco became acquainted with a fellow prisoner, Rustichello of Pisa, who had some reputation in literary matters. Marco dictated to his friend the story of his travels and adventures; from the French text of Rustichello the book was soon translated into various languages. For many years the story of Marco was the sole source of information possessed by Europeans regarding the Orient; to the men of his own day his stories seemed as incredible as until recently the Egyptian adventures of the Greek Herodotus appeared to foreign readers; it is gratifying to note that later writers have verified in very large degree the narratives of both Herodotus and Marco. The curious student could spend a delightful hour or two in reading an authentic account of Marco, ("Millioni" as his incredulous contemporaries called him) and comparing the ascertained facts with Eugene O'Neill's treatment of him as the prototype of the modern "go-getter".

Khublai left no successor capable of effectively carrying on his dynasty; the Mongols were finally expelled and in 1368 the first emperor of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) ascended the throne. Under this dynasty, which is sometimes called the "Golden Age" of Chinese literature, drama flourished; of the large number of plays written about six hundred are known to us.

Following the Ming Dynasty came the warlike Manchus covering the long period from 1644 to 1912. This régime is memorable because of the introduction of the military hero who, to a considerable extent, replaced in popular favor the traditional student hero. The Chinese revere scholarship; for centuries their dramatic favorite had been the brilliant student who passed with credit the state examination and climbed from round to round the ladder of success until he reached the exalted rank of Mandarin. The swaggering military hero with his fierce sword-fights on the stage caught and held the popular fancy; though it relegated to a secondary place the old time student favorite, it did not entirely drive him from

the stage; to this day Chinese audiences have a warm place in their affections for the quiet scholar hero who wins his battles with the pen rather than the sword.

Chinese plays are brought out in connection with a large number of public and private affairs; they form a part of national and religious festivals, weddings, fairs, and private parties; in taverns they are a constant part of the entertainment of the guests. They are much wider in their scope than in Greece where plays were exclusively religious performances in honor of the god Dionysus and were confined to the theater sacred to his name.

The methods of dramatic classification employed by various nations afford material for an interesting study. Shakespeare in *Midsummer Night's Dream* makes fun of the extremes to which subdivision was carried in his day. The Greeks cultivated three divisions of regular drama,—tragedy, comedy and satyr-drama. The Spanish of Calderon's day recognized two classes only,—comedies and *autos*. The Chinese employ a classification different from that of Greece and Spain; they do not divide their plays into tragedies and comedies; they put them under two groups,—civil and military. Military plays generally contain combats and threats of violent deeds of all sorts; civil dramas deal with aspects of social life; in them we find a marked tendency toward the comic. The Chinese make a further classification in twelve categories according to the subject; of these twelve the highest is that of religious plays, but even in this class we often find that the religious element has degenerated into buffoonery. Some of the Chinese plays treat of historic events, but a Chinese law forbids the bringing on the stage of emperors, empresses, and the famous princes, ministers, and generals of former ages; this law, however, is often violated. If we may judge by our English translations, by far the largest number of extant Chinese plays fall under the head of domestic drama; a common topic of these plays is the treatment of criminal themes and plots; their favorite virtue is piety toward parents and parents-in-law; another frequently employed

theme is the discovery of concealed crime, and the vindication of persons who have long been regarded as guilty. Another common character is the man who has made the best record in the stage examinations. Of the religious doctrines set forth in Chinese drama the Buddhistic element is most pronounced; favorite themes exemplifying Buddhistic doctrines are self-sacrifice and utter absorption in the religious life.

Mr. A. R. Priest distinguishes three kinds of Chinese drama: the classical, the popular and the rustic. The classical drama, still fostered by learned amateurs, is rigid in its conformity to fixed tradition in gesture, words and music; the technical principles are not passed along in written form but rather by oral transmission from each teacher to his successor; the music is written especially for each play, whereas in the popular drama the same music may be employed in different plays.

The popular drama is much looser in construction than the classical form; the music is inferior and the action is not so fully developed. The rustic drama is distinguished chiefly by the emphasis which it places upon the musical instruments employed,—trumpet and rattle.

There are many printed collections of Chinese plays, but the printed version usually differs very materially from the stage text.

Chinese drama professes a high moral purpose; every Chinese play should, we are told, teach a lesson. An article of the Chinese penal code imposes upon the drama of that country a virtuous aim; those who write immoral plays are supposed to undergo after death a punishment which will continue as long as their plays are performed. Virtuous though Chinese drama be in theory, it falls far short of this ideal in practice; one Chinese critic says that among ten thousand playwrights not one is to be found intent upon perfecting the education of mankind by means of precepts and examples.

A Chinese dramatic performance is a curious combination of spoken and sung dialogue, and dancing, with musical accompaniment. In tone it is sentimental and melodramatic, adjusted

to the tastes of the lower classes rather than to the élite; it makes no attempt at intellectual profundity; its chief aim is to furnish a pleasant entertainment with a tincture of elementary instruction. A modern critic attributes the scarcity of modern Chinese plays in English translations to the fact that they are hardly worth translation. Mantzius criticizes modern Chinese drama for the coarseness of its realism, its tendency to extreme exaggeration,—its lack of individual characterization, and its rapid changes of scene from earth to heaven and to the lower regions.

We find in Chinese drama a curious counterpart of the Greek *deus ex machina*,—a sudden intervention of supernatural beings to untangle a hopelessly complicated dramatic knot.

The student of comparative drama soon finds himself profoundly impressed by marked similarities in the art of nations so widely separated in space and time that any direct influence of one upon the other is unthinkable. When we discover the striking resemblance between the dramatic art of China and that of the classical Greeks and of the Elizabethan English, we find, in this evidence of the universality of drama, corroboration of the theory of the essential brotherhood of the entire human race.

Among the resemblances between the theatric arts of the Chinese and the Greeks are: the assumption of female rôles by men; the use of masks (real masks by the Greeks, faces painted into the semblance of masks by the Chinese); simplicity of settings; schematic stage movements; the transition from spoken words to lyrical singing and dancing to express heightened emotion; the strict subjection of personal emotion and interests to a greater emotion and interest; in both we have a supreme illustration of the blending of speech, song, music, dancing, and setting into an ideal portrayal of a significant event.

There are likewise some striking parallels between Chinese and Elizabethan dramatic art: the paucity of stage properties; the reliance upon the imagination of the audience to fill out

the scantiness of scenery. If we laugh at a bit of calico held up by two stage hands to represent a Chinese wall we remember that the opened fingers of the yokels supplemented by a little loam represented a crannied wall in *Midsummer Night's Dream;* if a single banner carried across the stage by a Chinese stage hand represents an army of one thousand men we may recall Shakespeare's mob of "four men in buckram." The prologue of English drama of various periods finds its prototype in Chinese plays; the assumption of female rôles by Chinese male actors finds its counterpart in the boy actors of Elizabethan times as well as in the adult men of the classical Greek stage; the artistic changes from prose to verse in Shakespeare's diction to express the mounting thought finds its counterpart in the Chinese and the Greek transitions from the spoken to the sung word; and finally, as Mr. Stark Young [1] has so aptly suggested, the couplets marking the entrance and the exits of Chinese actors find a striking parallel in Shakespeare's practice of ending a scene by a striking couplet, as Juliet's exit speech:

> "Love give me strength! And strength shall help afford.
> Farewell, dear father!"

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to determine the date of the erection of the first Chinese theater. Glenn Hughes [2] thinks it probable that in the primitive period the performances were given in palaces and temples rather than in regular playhouses.

We need not expect to find in China anything approximating to the superb architecture of the subsidized theaters of modern Europe; one Chinese theater is much like another,—architecturally unpretentious, rectangular, and differing chiefly in size. There is a strange disagreement among the newest authorities over the question of a roof in Chinese theaters; one recent writer says that unroofed theaters are common; Mr.

[1] Mei Lan-Fang, Stark Young, Theater Arts Monthly, April, 1930.
[2] The Story of the Theatre, Glenn Hughes, Samuel French. N. Y. City. 1928.

Priest affirms that "the Chinese theater always has a roof except in the case of temple theaters which consist only of the actual stage itself."

As we look at the platform stage, raised five or six feet above the floor we note the absence of a front curtain, but our eye is at once caught by the beautifully embroidered tapestry forming the background. Access to the stage is provided by two doors in the back wall. The plain floor-cloth of our American theater is replaced by a magnificent Chinese rug. The properties are very simple,—perhaps a table, a few chairs. The stage projecting into the auditorium furnishes a striking parallel to that of the Elizabethans; a railing serves as a barrier between auditorium and actors; if we may trust certain modern specialists of the Elizabethan theaters there was a similar railing around the stage of the theater of Shakespeare's day. The floor of a Chinese theater is not bare and unprovided with seats for the "groundlings" as in the Elizabethan theaters; the space is partitioned off with boxes; each box, provided with a table and chairs, accommodates five or more persons. The front portions of the galleries are similarly divided; these boxes are regarded as the choicest places in the theater; ladies prefer them to those on the main floor.

The audience in a Chinese theater instinctively chooses its place on a basis of social distinction; on the main floor and in the front rows of the first gallery sit the gentlemen and the ladies of social standing; in the upper gallery may be found the humbler classes. Mantzius describes very graphically the costumes and deportment of the ladies and gentlemen on the main floor; with their ticket they are given a program, a cup of tea and a pipe; the ladies are elegantly attired, with coiffures that to western eyes seem amazingly elaborate; the gentlemen smoke and chat during the performance; the rabble in the upper balcony talks unrestrainedly, laughs boisterously, ignores the play if it is uninteresting and comes and goes at its pleasure.

A curious custom allows a spectator to name at will the play which he desires to see; on the program which he is

handed at the time of purchasing his ticket is printed the titles of the plays which the management proposes to offer at that time; if any spectator wishes a change in the program he may make it by the payment of a small sum. This statement by Mantzius arouses some sceptical comment; we cannot help wondering how the audience as a whole receives this arbitrary change of program; it is difficult to believe that in the new type of theater, at least, conducted on an occidental commercial basis, such an upsetting of orderly procedure would be tolerated by either management or audience.

There has come down to us a book of travels dating from the middle of the seventeenth century; the book gives us a graphic account of performances in taverns of that day; the Chinese plays of today conform essentially to this description. The writer tells us that every hotel or inn in China had its own company of actors; they entertained the guests during mealtime; their repertory was large and they were prepared to act any of their plays at a moment's notice; they passed around among the guests a book containing the text of all their plays; the guests were given the privilege of selection. The cost of witnessing the plays was astonishingly low; this traveler said that for his dinner, his drink, and the performance, he paid about a shilling. He remarks that not much of this could have been paid to the actors; the little given to them must have become a very small amount for each when divided among the company; he wonders whence these actors secured the money needed for their expensive costumes.

From another traveler whose book was published in London in 1827 we get a glimpse of theatricals in private houses. It should be noted that this description dating from the beginning of the nineteenth century agrees essentially with the account of the traveler of the middle of the seventeenth century. Of the performance in private houses this traveler says: "As soon as the guests have sat down to dinner four or five richly dressed actors enter the hall; they bow so respectfully and nimbly that they touch the floor four times with their foreheads. Then one of them presents to the highest in rank of the

persons present a book in which the titles of some fifty to sixty plays are written in golden letters. These plays they know by heart and can act on the spur of the moment. The most distinguished guest chooses the piece and the performance begins by beating drums of buffalo skin and playing on flutes and trumpets. The space between the two rows of tables is used as a stage. A carpet is spread on the floor and for want of 'wings' the actors use the adjoining rooms, from which they come out when they are going to act. They always play by daylight."

The rates of admission vary with the type of theater; those conducted on the new commercial principles exact prices higher than those charged at the theaters of the older type. A curious feature of the old fashioned theaters is the privilege which they extend, of free admission for the first part of the performance; the spectator who is impecunious or really bored may then leave without molestation by the management.

The performance begins late in the afternoon or at an early hour in the evening; as the entertainment lasts six or seven hours the practiced theater-goer drops in late, because he knows that the best actors do not often make their appearance before nine or ten o'clock at night.

A Chinese performance lasting from 5 P. M. until midnight would appear intolerable to a modern audience had not Eugene O'Neill by his *Strange Interlude* proved that it is possible to hold the attention during a period of five or six hours. The Chinese audience takes what recreation it wishes during the performance; it comes and goes at pleasure; it drinks tea, smokes its pipe, it chats without fear of reproof; it expresses its feelings without hesitation; if it likes the play it shouts assent; if it is displeased with the acting, it yells its disapproval.

A discussion of the technique of Chinese music would be intelligible only to musical experts; to those who desire to study the subject in some detail we recommend the standard work *The Chinese Theater*, by A. E. Zucker, and an article "Chinese Music," by Winthrop Sargent in the *Theater Arts Monthly* for May, 1930. From the technical discussion of Mr. Sargent we select a few characteristic features of Chinese music which

suggest a comparison with certain fundamental principles of Greek art. Mr. Sargent calls attention to the stress which Chinese musical theorists lay upon "reserved simplicity": "The greatest music is always simple; the greatest laws are always moderate." "If music is in excess there is license; if the laws are in excess there is discontent." In a similar vein run the quotations. The student of Greek art is instantly reminded of the Greek proverb "Nothing in excess" and of that other puzzling but profound remark by a Greek poet: "The half is greater than the whole." The quotations from Chinese musical theorists adequately characterize the best music of that country. "Chinese music," says Mr. Sargent, comparing that music with our own, "is more severe, more restrained, and perhaps more subtle." The function of Chinese music, as Mr. Sargent sees it, is so strikingly like that of tragedy as defined by Aristotle that the Greek student marvels at finding the Aristotelian catharsis theory of tragedy applied to Chinese music. Speaking of that music Mr. Sargent says: "The expression of passion is foreign to its nature. Its function is to pacify, to moderate the emotions rather than to excite them, to bring about that state of perfect balance and calm that seems to be so dear to the oriental." Both Plato and Aristotle would bow in acquiescence. Plato would applaud the reference to the "state of perfect balance and calm,"—he is constantly insisting upon it in his *Republic* and he bases his attacks upon the Greek poets on the precise ground that they "feed and water the passions" instead of restraining them; Aristotle likewise in his *Poetics* finds in "the purification of the emotions of pity and fear" by tragedy a "balance and calm" that Mr. Sargent finds in Chinese music.

The conventions of the Chinese stage invariably arouse, at first sight, the laughter of spectators from other countries. An excellent illustration will be found in Hazelton and Benrimo's *Yellow Jacket* which appeared a few years ago in this country; this play faithfully portrays the peculiarities of a genuine Chinese drama. In the *Yellow Jacket* a baby was represented by a stick of wood wrapped in a bit of cloth; when one of the characters died and was to be thought of as ascending

to heaven, the property man brought a stepladder up which the actor slowly climbed; a boat was represented by some chairs and a stool; two stage hands rhythmically swayed bamboo poles which suggested the rowing of the boat; another rubbed together before the eyes of the audience two pieces of sandpaper, to suggest the swish of the water.

The naïve devices employed in the *Yellow Jacket* were truly characteristic of the native Chinese drama. In this drama a forest is represented by tying to the back of a chair a small branch of a tree; to conduct an army from a province to a distant part of the country, the general takes a whip in one hand and a bridle in the other and gallops around the stage a few times to the deafening accompaniment of the orchestra; he then informs the audience that the army has arrived at its new destination; to pass from one room to another the actor makes a motion as though he were opening a door and then lifts a foot indicating that he is stepping across a threshold. A Chinese audience does not miss the scenery or the absence of elaborate attempts at illusion. Even in the *Yellow Jacket* American audiences, though inclined for a moment to smile at the crude stage devices, almost instantly forgot them and gave themselves up to the realities of the play. The conventions of the Chinese stage suggest a comparison with those of the Elizabethan period; there too the absence of scenery was not a drawback to dramatic effect. The Greeks, the Elizabethans and the Chinese anticipated by centuries the present tendency of European stage managers to dispense with elaborate mechanical devices for producing perfect illusion and to leave much to the imagination of the spectators.

The Chinese dramatist, like the ancient Greek tragedians, almost invariably selects a traditional subject; he finds his themes in well known novels, in the lives of historic persons, in satire and in burlesque. The Chinese audience, like the Greeks in the ancient theater, know the story by heart; their attention is not distracted by elaborate scenery or properties; they are not diverted by the necessity of ascertaining the theme or subject matter of the play; they devote their whole atten-

tion to the actors; of the acting they are watchful and severe critics.

The training of a Chinese actor is long and strenuous. The future Thespians, young boys of the poorer classes, enter an apprenticeship of six or seven years; during this period they are trained in a wide range of subjects,—reciting, singing, dancing, acrobatics, sword play, and, above all, memorizing an extensive number of rôles, fifty or sixty at the least. The principle of specialization prevails; each actor is trained for a single character and he is invariably cast for a rôle of that type. A similar method of casting prevails in our American cinemas; our audiences become so accustomed to their "villains" that they will not tolerate these actors in any other rôle. Upon the completion of a strenuous training of six or seven years, with a technique traditional and rigid in every detail, the actor is obliged to devote another period of the same length to professional acting that he may repay the director for the expense incurred in training the neophyte. When he has completed this term of enforced acting he becomes independent and he is free to make his own business arrangements. The results achieved by this intensive training are very remarkable; Chinese male actors impersonate women so skilfully in voice and action that it is impossible to detect the deception.

One of the notable features of modern dramatic history is the marked increase in interest which intelligent auditors all over the civilized world are showing in the drama of foreign nations. The increasing interest in the Chinese theater is due largely to the extraordinary artistry of the leading actor of that nation, Mei Lan-Fang. His appearance in *The Death of the Tiger General*, a sixteenth century play dating from the Ming Dynasty, called forth enthusiastic comment from capable critics who had made a special study of his technique. The reader of this chapter on the Chinese Theater can appreciate the reference to the Ming Dynasty and fully understand the significance of the statement that Mei Lan-Fang is "Foremost of the Pear Orchard." His repertory numbers four hundred plays. He is a strict follower of the dramatic tradition of his country yet he

exemplifies the possibility of originality and self-expression even within the boundaries of classicism; he shows his reverence for this classicism by reviving many of the old forms in music and dancing; he manifests his genius by blending harmoniously these revived old forms with modern Chinese dramatic art. A striking example of his skill in combining the old with the new is his setting of the classical dances of former days to modern Chinese music. He has restored the flute to the position of influence which it held in the old days. His voice is flexible, his muscular control is notable; his eyes are expressive, his face schooled into the characteristic Chinese restraint; above all, his personal magnetism and sensitiveness are so great that he not only thrills his audience but he is in turn swayed by them and by his fellow actors on the stage.

Though a Chinese audience cares very little about scenic accessories it lays great stress upon elaborate costumes and insists that they shall be thoroughly in keeping with the fashions of the period which they represent. Accordingly we find even in the taverns elaborate and expensive wardrobes; not only must the dresses be rich, they must copy minutely the old patterns which have been handed down by tradition.

The Chinese name for the stage warrior, "painted face," graphically indicates his make-up. The actor representing a warrior paints his face elaborately in bright colors arranged in striking designs; so thickly is the paint laid on that the uninitiated spectator is likely to think that the actor is wearing a genuine mask. A Chinese stage-warrior is an awe-inspiring creature; he struts and utters blood-curdling roars; in his singing he ranges from deep bass to a shrill tenor; heavily padded like his Greek predecessors, his headdress with enormous plumes of waving pheasant feathers makes the four or five inch hair-tuft of the Greek tragedian seem like a mere puppet.

The number of parts is so large that there is a considerable variation in the classification as found in the critical treatises. Mantzius distinguishes four groups of female rôles:—the old woman; the first female lover; the young girl; the slave girl. Mr. Priest recognizes merely the young woman and the old

woman. Of the male rôles Mantzius distinguishes four classes: the old man, the young man, the villain, the comic actor. Priest recognizes the young man, the old man, the warrior and the clown.

For many centuries men monopolized both male and female rôles on the Chinese professional stage. We are told that during the dynasty of the Mongols (1280-1368) there were some actresses, but, after one of the emperors had made an actress his favorite, women were banished from the stage by the emperor's son that his mother might not be constantly reminded of her former low station; this proscription continued until the opening of the twentieth century. With the establishment of the Republic we find women enjoying greater opportunities, and they are now appearing on the stage, usually in casts made up exclusively of female rôles, but occasionally even in those containing a proportion of men. This invasion of the stage by women meets the stern condemnation of the conservatives, who object to their presence because of the grossly realistic scenes which are enacted on the Chinese stage.

In China actors, as we see from many illustrations in technical books, do not as a rule wear masks; yet they are really well known in China; it is probable that in early times the Chinese employed animal and demon masks. Mantzius asserts that masks are worn today only by a certain type of villain in pantomime; Hughes limits their use to comic or supernatural characters.

Actors are paid according to the kind of rôle in which they specialize. The artist taking the part of a hero receives the highest salary; the maximum seems to be about $2500 a year; the comedian receives the smallest salary. Chinese actors, however, are able to make substantial additions to their professional income by performances in private houses.

Though the Chinese are extremely fond of drama they have but very slight regard for it as an art and they attend the theater simply for amusement. They hold the profession in very low esteem. Actresses are, by an old statute, placed on a level with women of the most immoral character;

COTHURNUS, MASKS AND ONKOS ON THE MODERN CHINESE STAGE.

there is a Chinese law which excludes from public examinations the sons of actors, barbers, and slaves. This exclusion from the state examinations is equivalent to depriving an actor of all opportunity of occupying an office under the state. Rank is determined in China not by heredity but by office; accession to a public office in China depends upon passing the state examination.

It is not surprising that actors in China feel so keenly the social stigma upon them that they are tempted to turn to the loose life which is popularly supposed to be characteristic of them all. The Romans, like the Chinese, despised the profession as a class, with the result that actors and the actresses of mimes, feeling the impossibility of securing social position, felt driven by despair into devious moral paths.

Chapter XXVI

JAPANESE DRAMA

"Tradition ascribes the origin of Japanese drama to a religious dance of a pantomimic character," says Professor A. N. J. Whymant in the new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica.* By the time the reader of The Story of the Drama has reached this chapter he has begun to anticipate a similar statement regarding the origin of the drama of each of the great oriental and occidental nations. We find it true of the drama of Greece, of India, of China, of Spain, of England and of France; though we have not specially emphasized the religious origin of Roman drama we have shown that the summoning of the Etruscan actors to Rome in 364 B. C. was for the purpose of appeasing the angry gods; Spanish dancing had its origin in religious dances of a prehistoric period; the Mysteries and the Miracles of England and the continent were distinctly religious in origin. It seems, in fact, attested that drama as a whole had a ritualistic origin, and that early drama was pantomimic with a dance accompaniment.

We frequently come upon three names of popular Japanese drama so similar in spelling that we are in danger of confusing them; we shall therefore explain the distinguishing features of these forms,—*Kabuki, Kagura, Kyogen.*

Originally the Japanese word *Kabuki* was a mere slang expression applied to an entertainment consisting of the popular songs of the day danced to music; gradually this colloquial word took on a more dignified connotation until today it has won a place in all serious treatises on Japanese drama.

The story of *Kabuki* and its origin centers in two interesting characters, a man, Sanzaburo, and a woman whom he taught to dance to his musical compositions. The woman is so much more

famous than her teacher that we shall begin our account of the establishment of *Kabuki* with the lady, *Okuni.*

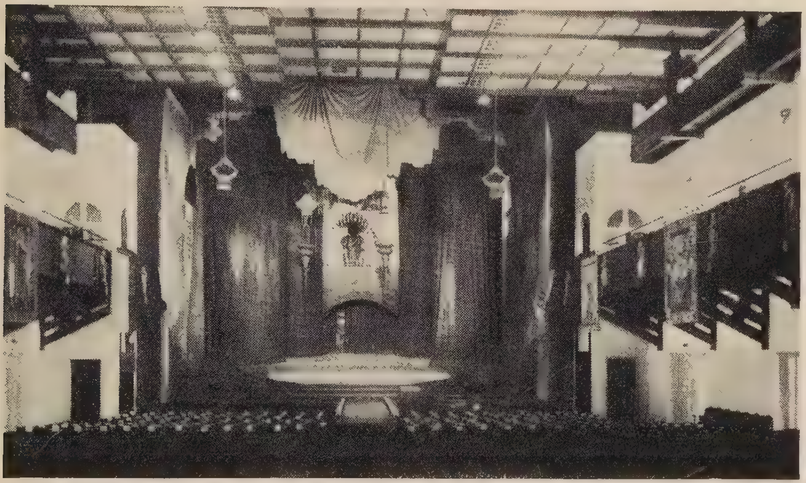
Somewhere near the end of the 16th century a dancing girl came from Izumo to the city of Kyoto. Her pedigree is somewhat shadowy but Professor Lombard [1] surmises that her father was an iron-worker; she was probably connected with the religious shrine at Izumo. What brought her to Kyoto at this time is unknown; tradition offers the plausible explanation that she was on a tour soliciting funds for the shrine. At any rate she appeared at Kyoto and created a sensation by her personal beauty, and her graceful dancing; the place which she selected for her dance, a river bed, strikes the modern reader as odd, but writers on Japanese life and customs frequently mention dried river beds as a favorite place for the dances and games of the Japanese populace. Okuni's dance, it should be noted, was something more than a mere popular exhibition; keeping close to the reputed object of her visit,—solicitation of money for the shrine in her home town, she performed religious dances in honor of the Buddhist deity, Amida.

Now enters the youth Sanzaburo whose future was to be so closely entwined with that of his pupil. This youth was a theological student in training for the priesthood in one of the Kyoto temples. His family belonged to the military caste but they had expressed a preference for a theological career for their son; that son seems to have shown very little enthusiasm over the decision of his family; he was more frequently found at social gatherings in Kyoto than in his study; he seems to have had a special fondness for *Nō* plays. Attracted by the furore the young dancer was arousing, he attended one of her performances and was infatuated; he was, however, attracted more strongly by her beauty and her grace than by her dancing; he felt that she could greatly increase her prestige if she could be induced to cast aside the restraints imposed by her religious dance and gratify more fully the robust popular taste. The admiration of the dancer and her young

[1] The Japanese Drama, F. A. Lombard. Allen & Unwin, Ltd., London. 1928.

admirer seems to have been mutual; she studied the music which he composed for her; she fitted the popular songs of the day to this music and she danced them so successfully that she and her trainer laid the foundations of the modern popular drama of Japan.

When the western cultural wave first invaded Japan predictions were freely made that the venerable *Kabuki* could not



THE THEATER IN SALZBURG
Showing the revolving stage.

hold its own against the lusty young invader. For a time it appeared probable that the pessimistic prediction would be verified; but when, after the World War, Japan entered upon a period of great commercial activity *Kabuki* shared the general prosperity and enjoyed a marked revival. Today *Kabuki* has regained its old-time grip on the nation; the new *Kabuki Theater* in Tokio, with a seating capacity of 4,000, and equipped with the most modern western inventions, including a revolving stage, is one of the finest buildings in the city.

The word *Kagura* is applied to songs accompanied by a pantomimic dance and intimately connected with the Shinto worship. Originally it was presented either on the ground or on a temporary stage; in its modern form it is brought out

on a permanent platform which forms part of the Shinto shrine.

As the performance is primarily for the pleasure of the god, the stage faces the shrine, and the deity is supposed to be the sole auditor, but the curtains which were originally intended to shut in the sides and back of the stage are now drawn so as to permit a view of the scene. Professor Lombard describes the *Kagura* substantially as follows: Just before the beginning of the performance a fire is lighted near the shrine; presently the performers (singers and musicians) with the director come upon the platform and seat themselves. The instruments employed in the performance are flute, harp, and flageolet; we know, however, that drums were sometimes substituted for the flageolet in performances of the *Kagura*. After a preliminary ceremony, the regular performance takes place. The entertainment continues through the entire night beginning at sunset and lasting until dawn.

The program includes singing and dancing; the singing is antiphonal. As the *Kagura* developed into a regular religious ceremony dancing assumed a prominent rôle necessitating a body of trained dancers; both men and women took part in these religious dances, but the women who participated were of higher social status than the men; before entering upon their service as attendants at the shrine the women had to pass an examination and earn a diploma; the connection of the male dancers with the shrine was not so close nor so permanent as that of the women.

Professor Lombard distinguishes between *Court Kagura*, *locally canonical Kagura*, and *non-canonical Kagura*. The service of the *Court Kagura* could appropriately be used at any shrine; *locally canonical Kagura* are the ceremonies performed at particular shrines such as that in the city of Nara which was, in the eighth century, the capital of the Empire and is now the county seat of a province; *non-canonical Kagura* are brought out by local communities who desire to commemorate some incident connected with a local deity or hero.

The word *Nō* is often spelled in English, *Noh*. Professor

Lombard prefers this form; Fenollosa and Pound give to their book [1] on the classical stage of Japan the title "'Noh' or Accomplishment." The writer on Japanese drama in the fourteenth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* adopts the form *Nō;* we shall use this shorter form because it is the traditional English spelling of the word.

At an early time the word *Nō* came to be applied to certain kinds of dramatic dances which had reached a high degree of perfection and grace. Growing out of several species of popular rural dances containing humorous features which were often crude and coarse, these elements were gradually eliminated by the Buddhist priests until the word *Nō* came to be applied only to serious plays of an ethical if not a religious content.

The full form of the word *Nō* is *nō-gaku* meaning "nō music." The word *Nō* means in Japanese "something done or accomplished;" students of Greek will at once notice the similarity of the root meaning of the Japanese word *Nō* to the Greek verb from which drama is derived, meaning to "do or perform an act of some kind" (not necessarily a "dramatic" action).

Keeping in mind that *Nō* is simply a shortened form of the compound *nō-gaku* and that *gaku* means in Japanese "music," we shall have little trouble in tracing the *Nō* drama back to its source. We must start our quest with another compound of *gaku,—saru-gaku* which literally means "monkey-music." "monkey-music" was a colloquial term for a kind of comic variety show which consisted of sleight-of-hand tricks accompanied by a running fire of jokes of vaudeville quality. Not a promising origin for the austere and aristocratic *Nō* we might feel inclined to say; but a pair of geniuses (Kiyotsugu and his son took two kinds of *gaku,* both comic, and by a kind of artistic alchemy they distilled a new drama which was essentially noble; out of the débris they made a new by-product, a comic performance which they dubbed *Kyogen* and used as a comic relief to the austere *Nō,* much as the satyr-

[1] 'Noh' or Accomplishment. Ernest Fenollosa and Ezra Pound. A. A. Knopf, New York. 1917.

drama was used in Greece as a complement to the solemn tragedy. The *gaku* (music) which they combined with the "monkey music" was the *den-gaku* (rice-field music), a comic species which closely resembled the *saru-gaku* (monkey music). From these two *gakus* they extracted and developed the finer elements, thus producing the *Nō-gaku*, (Nō-music or Nō-drama); the by-products they utilized as the form of comic drama to which the name *Kyogen* was given. All this momentous dramatic creation took place in the beginning of the fifteenth century, the period which bears the gloomy title of the "Dark Age of Japanese Drama." Relatively dark, perhaps, but it was not the darkness of Erebus.

For a time the early *Nō* carried with it a distinguishing word such, for example as *den-gaku,—no-Nō*, indicating the particular form of popular dance out of which the *Nō* arose. Thus, *Sarugaku-no-Nō* means the *Nō* originating in the dance called *Sarugaku*. As these various forms of the *Nō* continued to develop under the Buddhist priests their differences tended more and more to disappear; the slight dissimilarities which continued were due to the hereditary technical methods of the players of the various forms of the *Nō*.

To the two great artists,—Kiyotsugu, a Shinto priest of the fourteenth century and his son Seami (1363-1444) was due the development of the *Sarugaku Nō*, not only to such a perfection that it supplanted the other forms of the *Nō* (*Ennen* and *Dengaku*) but that ultimately it gave to the word *Nō* not merely the abstract meaning of "the perfection of an art," but the concrete significance of the perfection of a particular art of dramatic performance.

We have spoken of the purging and development through which the *Sarugaku* passed during the transition from a crude form of dramatic expression into the perfected *Nō*. An amplification may assist the reader. At first the priests cast aside in contempt the comic elements of the *Sarugaku*, but they were wise enough to recognize the important fact that the joy of life may demand expression even in the most solemn moments; the history of drama abundantly supports this assertion. The

Buddhist priests found a definite use for the features of the *Sarugaku* which were discarded while it was on its way to sublimation as a *Nō;* they turned these elements into comical interludes which in the early days of the *Nō* constituted a part of every *Nō* performance. These comic features were, however, given a name which indicates the contempt felt by the priests for this alien element in a dignified *Nō* program. The word *Kyogen* means in Japanese "crazy speech." The *Kyogen* were at first mere concessions of the sacred representatives of Buddhism to the human craving for a laugh, but they were so eagerly welcomed by the common people that they came to rank next to the *Nō* in dramatic significance. We should think of the *Sarugaku*, therefore, as developing ultimately into two branches which were essentially distinct forms though they are often blended on a program; the *Nō* is a sublimated form of the *Sarugaku;* the *Kyogen* represents the comic element. The *Nō* was addressed to the cultured class and made a spiritual appeal; the *Kyogen* developed into a lighter form of social comedy which the Buddhist priests finally came to value as an adjunct to the religious service.

Authorities are agreed that the *Nō* was from the very beginning essentially an aristocratic drama fostered and attended exclusively by the court, the nobility and the warrior class. The common people had their own form of theatrical entertainment and they never entered the halls where the *Nō* was presented except on the rare occasions when some ruling Shogun, in a spirit of gracious condescension, invited the commons to participate in a celebration at which a *Nō* was performed. From what we know of the cultural demands made on the audience by a genuine *Nō*, we can imagine the illiterate element looking on in wonder and saying substantially what the bored Sly said in *The Taming of the Shrew:*

> " 'Tis a very excellent piece of work, madam lady; would 'twere done!"

Mr. Jiro Harada the writer of the article on *Nō* drama in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* divides the *Nō* dramas which

number something over two hundred and fifty into five groups:

1. Called *Waki-nō* pieces because in these plays the secondary character, called *Waki,* corresponding roughly to the Deuteragonist in Greek drama, assumes an important rôle in the play.

2. Plays dealing with the ghosts of warriors.

3. Those in which the leading rôle is assigned to noble ladies.

4. Plays treating of various phases of human nature, such as insanity and love.

5. Those which deal with demons or other frightful supernatural beings, and also those of a more joyous nature. The reader who has access to the new edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* should study carefully the numerous illustrations accompanying Mr. Harada's article on *Nō* Drama.

In an old book on the *Nō* Drama we find a classification which differs somewhat from that given by Mr. Harada.

1. A *Kami-Nō* in praise of the gods who have guarded the country from the beginning of time to the present.

2. A battle play. This logically follows the *Kami-Nō* to the gods, because the gods and the emperors brought peace to the country by conquering its foe.

3. A play of women. This naturally follows the war play, for after war comes peace and in times of peace human love manifests itself; furthermore since the previous play concerned itself with men, we now should have a contrasting piece in which women have the leading rôle.

4. *The Play of Spirits.* Life is a fleeting dream. In the spirit-play we behold struggling and sinful humanity, its transitory pleasures and glories. The soul should turn its thoughts from this perishing world to Buddha and eternity.

5. Pieces which, in lively scenes, teach the moral obligation of men in this world. This fifth class, inculcating moral obligations, logically follows the fourth, which shows the danger of disregarding these obligations.

6. A concluding play, eulogizing the lords who are in

the audience, invoking blessing upon them and upon the actors. Mr. Fenollosa says that though the usual *Nō* program consists of six pieces, it may exceed this number, or it may contain five or even fewer parts.

It is important to keep this classification in mind for it will help the spectator or student of Japanese drama to understand a *Nō* performance; Mr. Harada, who is an official in Japanese Museums, and writes from first hand knowledge, says that at a *Nō* performance a play from each of the five classes is given in the order of the classification, with a *Kyogen* generally supplemented by a dance between each pair of plays. The performance which, as might be surmised from the lengthy program, lasts all day, is opened by a religious piece, called *Okina*, named after the leading character who represents the goddess of the Sun.

The singers on the side intonate sometimes in chorus, sometimes in accompaniment with the actor.

A study of the five or six parts of which a *Nō* program is composed will clearly reveal an essential difference between the *Nō* drama and that of western Europe. Our occidental drama, beginning with that of the Greeks, is distinguished by the selection of a definite situation or problem and its solution or at least an attempt at a solution. In the *Medea* of Euripides for example, we have a faithful wife cast off by her husband; in Shakespeare's *Lear* we find filial ingratitude; in Ibsen's *Ghosts* the plight of a mother who seeks to save her son from the physical and moral contagion of a depraved husband. Each of these plays, fairly representative of the drama of western Europe, stops when it has brought to a conclusion the treatment of a limited segment of life; each portion of a *Nō* program may treat of an individual situation but the group collectively constitutes an encyclopaedic view of life; not so much of a single human life as of existence in general.

The artistic basis of the *Nō* is subtle allusion; only the trained few, the aristocrats of rank and intellect can appreciate or even understand the references.

A *Nō* play takes as its starting point a legend regarding

the apparition of a god, some heroic deed in war, or some great historic occurrence; a common theme is a journey which one of the characters is undertaking; as he walks along the bridge leading to the stage or paces back and forth across the platform he informs the audience of the nature of his journey and he sometimes explains the symbolism of his gestures and the occasion and meaning of his dance.

The *Nō* stage was of wood, about eighteen feet square and open on three sides. On one side was an extension for the singers; another extension at the back was set apart for the *Nō* musicians. The notable feature of the *Nō* stage was a platform or bridge slightly sloping downward and closed by a curtain at the lower end; from behind the curtain the actors appeared and slowly made their way along the bridge to the stage. We note, also, that the stage sloped slightly downward toward the audience; this fact is worth mentioning because it explains the terminology "up stage" and "down stage" which is still in use in our own country although our modern American stages are perfectly level. A few years ago a company of foreign ballet dancers accustomed to a sloping stage in their native theater found it difficult to adjust their dancing to our American level stages.

On the bridge which extends up to the stage are placed three small potted pine trees which divide the bridge into three sections; on the back wall is another pine tree, but this is painted, rather than real. The writer of the article in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* considers these saplings and the painted tree an indication that the *Nō* was originally performed in the woods. Other critics consider the pine tree, which is constantly used in Japanese art, a symbol of the immortality in which the Japanese profoundly believe. Fenollosa sees in the painted tree in the background the symbol of the unchanging; he apparently derives the idea from the fact that it "is painted right on the back of the stage, and, as this cannot be shifted, it remains the same for all plays."

The traditions of *Nō* acting are maintained by five schools, four of which have existed since the fifteenth century; the

fifth, named *Kita*, though coming into existence at a later time, is recognized officially; there is a sixth (*Umewaka*) which numbers many adherents. Of the five schools of acting the preëminence was officially conferred upon the *Kanze;* the histrionic methods of that school were adopted as the standard at court and the chief actors of the *Kanze* officially outranked the actors of all the other schools.

A *Nō* actor must be a master of graceful postures, of chanting, of dancing, and of acting. In the old days the actors of the popular theaters were excluded from *Nō* performances. Some forty or fifty years ago the leader of a famous troupe of popular actors was determined to witness personally a *Nō* presentation. He disguised himself and the members of his troupe and without detection he gained access to the coveted exhibition. The visit had important results; so carefully did the visitors observe the details that they were able to imitate them in public. At a later date the ban on popular actors at a *Nō* performance was lifted with the result that these actors imitated the *Nō* plays still more extensively. This imitation of the *Nō* reacted so powerfully that by 1898 the music and the methods of acting in the popular theater showed marked traces of the influence of the *Nō*.

The habit of attending theaters in disguise was not confined to the plebeian actors; even the *Nō* actor occasionally yielded to the desire to go to an ordinary theater; he originally ran a serious risk in case of detection; when a *Nō* actor was engaged by the court he signed a rigidly worded contract to maintain absolute secrecy even toward his wife regarding what he saw and heard at the palace; he promised, further, not to visit questionable resorts or to go to the popular theater. He was warned that violation of his promise would be visited by severe punishment.

At a later time the edict against visiting the public theater by the *Nō* actors was so greatly modified that the famous Minoru and his sons occasionally attended the theater where the distinguished popular actor Danjuro performed.

A boy intended for the Japanese stage begins his actual stage appearance at the early age of seven in one of the juvenile rōles of the *Kabuki* plays. He learns by observation as well as by practice; he carefully watches and imitates his elders. Each day before leaving the theater the child actor makes a call at the dressing rooms of the chief actors and reverently bows to them; thus early is he taught respect for actors and for the histrionic profession. The physical training of a boy actor includes dancing and the acquisition of graceful poise and posture. When the young boy has completed his training and is about to receive official advancement in rank a very pretty ceremony is held in the theater; a curtain, drawn back, reveals a double row of actors clearly defined against a screen of gold; the leading actor of the company steps forward, announces the completion of the apprenticeship of the young actor, gives the new stage name which as a full fledged artist the youth will henceforth bear and asks the support and indulgence of the audience for the young man who is about to enter in full upon his career. We read with some regret that this pretty initiation is enjoyed only by young men who are connected with prominent and hereditary actor families or, in the absence of such prestige, by youths of special promise; a less promising member of the company or one less socially prominent must content himself with a more general introduction which has been deftly incorporated within the lines of the play.

We note the curious anomaly that although Japanese shopkeepers and artisans possessed in olden times a passionate love of the theater and eagerly sought portraits of the leading actors, they refused to receive these artists in their homes, and scorned them as social pariahs. The nobles and their military retainers despised the theater as well as the acting fraternity; their contempt was due to the fact that a nobleman by the very act of attending a theater became polluted through contact with the despised common people; many a gay young military dandy, however, tiring of the endless drill and bored by the rigid etiquette of the noble house to which he was attached

stole secretly into the place from which his code so sternly debarred him.

Masks are used in this *Nō* drama, for spirits, gods, women; Fenollosa apparently limits their use to these classes, but Mr. Harada's illustrations in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* show a broader use; his seven masks represent the divinity Okina, young women, more elderly women, elderly men and female demons.

When Eugene O'Neill extended his *Strange Interlude* to a five hour stretch he was thought to have reached the limits of audacity. To a Chinese or a Japanese audience a five hour performance would seem a mere episode; we read of *Nō* performances lasting five days on certain occasions, such as initiations and marriages, and four days, as memorial services for the illustrious dead. On one of the days of a longer performance the common populace of Yedo is admitted; it is a picturesque sight; as the officers of the city assemble the night before the performance, each carries a lighted lantern indicating the street to which he belongs. Of the scene Mr. Fenollosa says graphically, "It looks like a place on fire, or like a camp before battle."

The attention of the auditor at a *Nō* play is severely taxed. Fenollosa, a scholar long familiar with the *Nō* at first hand expresses well the difficulty confronting the auditor: "One can only trace out the words of the text and say that they are spoken, or half sung and chanted, to a fitting and traditional accompaniment of movement and color, and that they are themselves but half shadows."

A *Nō* play is evidently unlike anything with which a western audience has any acquaintance. The movements of the actors are strictly formal, stately in posture; the attitudes are intended to make clear the spiritual content of the play. From a mere translation the reader cannot possibly form an adequate idea of the weird hypnotic influence of an acted *Nō*.

The printed *Nō* play makes its appeal to various classes of readers. The student of comparative religion finds in it valuable material; the reader of the mediaeval moralities is

able to compare the doctrines of Buddhism with those of Christianity; the general student of drama will perhaps be chiefly interested in those which deal with supernatural beings. Fenollosa speaks of the psychology of these ghost plays as "amazing;" he declares that the *Nō* is "unquestionably one of the great arts of the world, and it is quite possibly one of the most recondite."

In recent years Japan has been swept by a torrent of western (largely American) cultural influences; the lovers of the classical *Nō* feared with reason that the same spirit of modernity which in the occident drove Greek from its stronghold in the universities might in Japan replace the time honored *Nō* with an ultra-modern drama. The latest writers on Japan while noting the invasion of Japanese theaters by the playwrights of Europe and America are recording a distinct reversion of popular sentiment to the venerable *Nō*. The fact that there are still five schools teaching the hereditary principles of this drama is taken as a cheering indication of the vitality of the *Nō*. The impartial historian is, however, compelled to add that the present interest in the *Nō* is kept up by precisely the element which has ever been its chief support,—the aristocracy, and that this class of supporters is rapidly passing away.

To the various forms of Japanese drama which we describe in this chapter we must add the important function played by marionettes, or *Doll Plays* as they are sometimes called. There is some dispute as to which is the older form of popular drama, *Kabuki* or the *Doll Play;* we may leave the discussion to the specialists; for us the essential fact is that both were in popular favor at the beginning of the seventeenth century, though puppets had been known in Japan many years before this time. Hughes, in his *The Story of the Theatre* neatly brings together the various elements which combined to make the marionette a rival of the *Kabuki* in popular favor. For a long time Japanese blind men had sung dramatic ballads, which though interesting, lacked the means of interpretation by dramatic action; while these bards were singing or chanting their ballads groups of itinerant minstrels were strol-

ling from village to village singing their own songs and supplementing them by tricks of jugglery. About this time a strange musical instrument called the *Samisen* was introduced into Japan, probably from China. If we unite the lays of the blind men with the songs of the minstrels and imagine the themes of these lays and songs acted by puppets to the accompaniment of the *Samisen* while the story itself was chanted, we have, according to Hughes, the origin of a new form of popular entertainment which proved to be a genuine rival of the *Kabuki*. This puppet theater seems to have arisen about 1600 A. D.; it flourished during the seventeenth century in every large city; many playwrights arose and their repertory became very large. Gradually the nature of the themes changed; the early ballads were replaced by military plays, and by portrayals of important historical and mythological events. Not only did these puppet plays serve as an incentive to the composition of dramatic literature, but they had a marked influence on stage settings and machinery; as the themes became more sensational, new dances were employed; it is claimed that the revolving stage which has played so prominent a rôle in modern German theaters had its origin in Japanese puppet plays. The scenery of the stage also departed from the traditional *Nō* setting; scenery painted in perspective formed a striking contrast to the unadorned stage of the *Nō* plays. These puppet plays attained the height of their popularity in the middle of the eighteenth century; from that time they steadily declined until by the beginning of the next century they had reached the lowest point in their history. In recent years there has been in Japan as in other countries a revival of interest in marionettes; today there are in that country traveling companies of puppet players, but few if any cities outside of Osaka maintain permanent marionette theaters.

Japanese puppets are larger than those used by Tony Sarg in this country; those of Mr. Sarg hardly reach above the human knee; some of the Japanese marionettes are nearly life size. These dolls are manipulated by the human hand from below rather than by wires or strings from above. True to a

convention which prevails on the legitimate Japanese stage the operator appears in full sight during the performance, dressed in black to make his presence less noticeable; spectators at a Japanese performance soon forget this intruder and concentrate their attention on the play. The Japanese puppet theater of today shares with the legitimate stage the loss of patronage due to the vogue of the photo-play.

Students of contemporary literature are calling attention to several new developments in Japanese drama, the outcome of the restoration of imperial power some seventy years ago, and due also in part to the heavy impact of the occident in recent years upon Japanese social customs. The abolition of the power of the Shoguns, and the reinstatement of the Imperial régime brought about a radical change in the themes of Japanese dramatists under the new government. The Shogunate had strictly forbidden the introduction of contemporary history into drama; the few writers who attempted to evade the law could do so only by changing the date and the place of the supposed historical event and by the substitution of fictitious names for the real characters. When these restrictions were removed under the new government dramatists gradually introduced into their plays the men who had taken a leading part in the changes which had ushered in a new Japan. Matsui, a leading dramatist of that country, by producing a play treating of the life of General Nogi, evoked widespread discussion.

The comic writers are finding a wealth of material in the laughable complications arising from the general adoption of western manners and customs in Japan. Among the first of these modern comedies were some short sketches which were brought out at the Imperial Theater; they were so successful that scores of writers followed the example; though they are mere skits best adapted to vaudeville, they are now produced at the legitimate theaters.

The influence of western technique seems to be most clearly marked in the historical plays treating of contemporaneous or recent themes; among the shaping forces most clearly traceable is that of Shakespeare. Sympathetic observers of the new

oriental drama are greatly pleased because the Japanese theater though adopting freely western technique and stage setting shows as yet no disposition to fling aside indiscriminately the good as well as the obsolete in the traditional methods of their drama.

MEDIAEVAL DRAMA

XXVII. THE MYSTERY
XXVIII. THE MORALITY
XXIX. THE INTERLUDE

CHAPTER XXVII

THE MYSTERY

It is a natural impulse to trace the English word "mystery" to the Latin *mysterium* and the Greek *musterion;* but this etymology, though plausible, is disputed by both Mantzius [1] and Chambers; [2] they find the origin of the English word "mystery" and the French *mystère* in the Latin *ministerium,* meaning "function" or "action." In support of this derivation it should be noted that in mediæval times the word "mystery" was spelled with an *i* rather than a *y;* thus, in Italian it was *misterio,* in French *mistère.* Chambers finds the earliest appearance of the word, in the form *misterie,* in a charter granted in 1402 by Charles VI to the *Confrérie de la Passion* of Paris. The French spelling *mystère* was the natural result of connecting the word with the Latin *mysterium* and the Greek *musterion.*

Professor A. W. Ward defines a Mystery as follows: "Properly speaking, mysteries deal with gospel events only and more particularly of the fulfilling history of the New Testament, the central mysteries of the redemption of the world as accomplished by the nativity, the passion and the resurrection."

In contrast with a "Mystery," a "Miracle" concerns itself with the lives of the saints, Biblical or post-Biblical; under the head of Miracles would fall the *Conversion of St. Paul* (*Conversio Beati Pauli Apostoli*), the Latin plays of Saint Nicholas, and the *Ludus de Sancta Katharina.*

Three distinct types of early mediæval drama may be noted,—Miracle Plays, Mysteries, Moralities. In English

[1] A History of Theatrical Art, Mantzius; Duckworth & Company, London.
[2] The Mediæval Stage, E. K. Chambers, Oxford University Press.

dramatic criticism, however, the words Miracle and Mystery are used interchangeably by modern writers.

The word Mystery as applied to English plays is a mere invention of the original editor of Dodsley's *Collection of Old Plays* who, in 1744, introduced the word Mystery, modeling it after the French word *mystère*, a name applied by the French to plays containing a scriptural theme. The usual names applied by the mediæval English themselves to their plays during the period when such works flourished were "plays" or "pageants" or "Miracles." Although the word Mystery therefore as applied to English miracle plays is a mere invention of an English editor, it is worth while to keep the term in mind because it provides a convenient method of distinguishing two kinds of religious plays actually in vogue in England, which may be differentiated under distinct heads,—*Miracle Plays* and *Mysteries*. The Mystery is concerned with Biblical themes, especially the events connected with the birth, the life, the passion, the resurrection of Christ; a Miracle concerns itself with the lives of the saints, Biblical or post-Biblical.

There is a dispute among modern scholars regarding the extent of the influence which classical Greek and Roman drama exerted during the Dark Ages. One group has made a vigorous effort to prove that the example of the old classics was potent during the period between the closing of the theaters in the sixth century A. D. and the establishment of a religious drama in the tenth and eleventh centuries; they even attempt to find traces of the ancient classics in the earliest church drama. Their argument is that the classical influence was kept alive in the city of Byzantium (Constantinople), that it was carried to the west by the returning Crusaders and helped to shape the earliest form of church drama. This theory is almost universally rejected by scholars; Mantzius says:—"The drama and the dramatic art of the Middle Ages are no continuation of the antique. They are separated from it by a gap, a blank interval, and the Middle Ages, instead of continuing the edifice commenced by the Greek, leave it unheeded and forgotten,

and create a new and characteristic drama of their own, springing from the tastes and capacities of the new times." In a similar vein professor Nicoll says: "It must be borne in mind that the medieval Mysteries which later developed into the full florescence of Elizabethan drama were indigenous to the soil." The most that these scholars will admit is that possibly the wandering and outlawed actors (for doubtless the profession of acting continued even through the Dark Ages), perpetuated a tradition which may have indirectly helped in establishing the church drama because it kept alive the ineradicable human instinct for drama; they admit further that these actors may have later exerted some influence in bringing about the secularization of the church drama.

There certainly are some survivors of the old classical tradition during the so-called Dark Ages; the first of these, the *Passion of Christ* is in Greek; the second, the Plays of Hroswitha are in Latin.

The Greek play bears a title which, exactly translated from the Greek into Latin is, *Christus Patiens;* it is sometimes quoted under the Latin title, sometimes by the English equivalent,—the *Passion of Christ*. The subject is the suffering of Christ and the anguish of the Blessed Virgin. The work was long attributed to Saint Gregory Nazianzen of the fourth century, but a number of modern scholars, including, especially, Dr. J. G. Brambs (Leipzig, 1885) have shown by a study of the meters and the diction of the play that it could not have originated at an earlier period than the tenth century. The real author is unknown; Dr. Brambs conjectures Joannes Tzetzes; others suggest Theodorus Prodromus. The play is of special interest to students of the ancient classics because it not only cites a few lines from Aeschylus but quotes from Euripides several hundred lines which would otherwise have been lost to the world. The spelling of the name *Hroswitha* varies in the works of the critics who discuss her plays. Chambers spells it *Hrotsvitha;* Mantzius, Pollard and Brooke, *Hroswitha;* Nicoll, *Hrotswitha;* Christopher St. John, a modern translator prefers *Roswitha;* Rosamond Gilder in an article in the

Theatre Arts Monthly for April, 1930, follows Chambers in adopting the form *Hrotsvitha.*

Who is this mysterious dramatist of the Dark Ages who with a single nameless Greek colleague fills the vast dramatic gap between the Seneca of the first century A. D. and the Mystery plays of the twelfth? We do not know the exact dates of her birth and death, her family name or many details of her life, but the Preface of her collection of plays tells us something about her, and from the tantalizingly brief personal data which she vouchsafes we can make inferences which give us at least a fleeting glimpse of her personality. Critics have a way of coupling with her name the epithet "the strong voice of Gandersheim." She herself not too modestly lays claim to this vocal puissance:[1] "I the strong voice of Gandersheim (*Ego, clamor validus Gandersheimnensis*) have not hesitated to imitate in my writing a poet whose works are widely read, my object being to glorify, within the limits of my poor ability, the laudable chastity of Christian virgins."

The author whom she professes to imitate is the Latin Terence, the one classical poet who as Dr. Ward so aptly says led "a charmed life in the darkest ages of learning." Hroswitha's imitative efforts resulted in half a dozen plays which have come down to us under the titles *Gallicanus, Dulcitius, Sapientia, Abraham, Callimachus, Paphnutius.*

The abbey of Gandersheim in Saxony was a center of light and scholarship in the darkness of the ninth century. It was founded in 850 A. D. by a Saxon Duke; established by a nobleman, it flourished under Imperial patronage. The abbesses were of aristocratic birth and they derived their authority directly from the king. It seems certain from the personal references of Hroswitha that she was born shortly before 940 A. D. and that somewhere about 960, when she was a little more than 20 years of age, she entered the convent. That she herself was of aristocratic birth seems a fair inference from the ascertained facts concerning the constituency of her convent. We are

[1] The Plays of Roswitha; translated by Christopher St. John, Medieval Library, 1923.

certain that she was an assiduous and ambitious student; to call her a brilliant scholar or a gifted poet would unduly stretch the facts. Rosamond Gilder sums her up in one trenchant sentence: "She was an acute observer, an avid scholar, an adventurous and enterprising soul." Readers who prefer to form an independent judgment will find her plays available in modern versions. Whether she was brilliant or mediocre, her "strong voice" aroused no answering echoes; her plays were probably read by her Gandersheim associates; whether or not they were acted is an unsettled question; at any rate she left no successor so far as we know; no other plays secular or religious have survived from the tenth century.

In spite of the Greek play *Christus Patiens* and the Latin plays of Hroswitha scholars are practically agreed that the mediæval church drama was of independent origin, uninfluenced by anything that had preceded it, or by anything contemporaneous. The service of the mediæval church itself was so essentially dramatic that no external source for the early church drama need be sought. As Brooke in his *The Tudor Drama* expresses it: "The pomp and ceremony of the mass, the gorgeous display of feast day processions, and, above all, the existence of potential bands of actors, in the robed and drilled monks and choristers, combined to make the Roman church an inevitable nursery of the histrionic arts."

The clergy desired to make more vivid and more easily comprehensible to their congregations the central events of the Christian faith; of these pivotal events the nativity, the crucifixion and the resurrection easily came to occupy a leading position. The liturgy and the ritual of the mediæval church were dramatically impressive. At the basis of this religious drama lies the antiphon or responsive chant, which was introduced into Italy by St. Ambrose of Milan. The antiphon was of Eastern origin, and, according to tradition, had its beginnings in the city of Antioch. Worshippers in modern ritualistic churches are familiar with the musical portions of the service in which one half of the choir responds to the lead of the other

half; in another form of the service the *cantor* sings the solos and the whole choir responds in alternation.

We find this tendency toward a dramatic form of liturgy first manifesting itself in connection with the Easter service. The earliest example of this antiphonal Easter service with which we are acquainted is the so-called *Quem Quaeritis*, a Latin colloquy between the angel and the three Marys at the tomb of Christ. In its simplest form the *Quem Quaeritis*, as it is called from the first two words addressed by the angel to the Marys, is found in a ninth century manuscript in the Benedictine Monastery of St. Gall, near Constance, Switzerland. In this manuscript the "trope" as it is called (the author is unknown) is in four lines of dialogue as follows:

Quem quaeritis in sepulchro, O Christicolae?
Iesum Nazarenum crucifixum, O caelicolae.
Non est hic: surrexit sicut praedixerat.
Ite, nuntiate quia surrexit de sepulchro.

"Whom seek ye in the sepulchre, O Christians?
Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified, O Ye Heavenly dwellers.
He is not here, he has risen just as he had predicted.
Go, announce that he has risen from the tomb."

It will be noticed that this is a dramatization of the Biblical narrative of the colloquy between the angel and the three Marys at the tomb. The first line was chanted by one of the members of the choir, who personated the angel; other members of the choir, representing the three Marys, chanted the second line; in reply the chorister personating the angel chanted lines three and four.

This elemental dramatic colloquy gradually became more elaborate. In a tenth century collection of tropes from Limoges the simple form is retained practically unaltered; a century later, however, we find in the same church at Limoges two Latin lines added, in narrative, non-dramatic form.

"Ad sepulchrum residens angelus nuntiat resurrexisse Christum: en ecce completum est illud quod olim ipse per prophetam dixerat ad patrem taliter inquiens, Resurrexi.

The angel resting at the sepulchre announces the resurrection of Christ: "Lo! Behold the accomplishment of that which he himself had once said to the father, speaking through the prophet."

We have extant material sufficient to enable us to trace the gradual additions to the originally simple form of the *Quem Quaeritis*. Thus, the so-called *Concordia Regularis* drawn up by the Bishop of Winchester in the last quarter of the tenth century proves that the *Quem Quaeritis* had been transferred from the mass and inserted in the service immediately after the third lesson at matins on Easter morning; complete instructions are furnished regarding the ceremonies which were to accompany the chanting of the *Quem Quaeritis*.

Brooke calls this *Concordia Regularis* "the first document dealing with the drama on English soil." The *Concordia* begins with these words: "While the third lesson is being chanted, let four brethren vest themselves; let one of these, vested in an alb, enter as though to take part in the service, and let him approach the sepulchre without attracting attention." This reference to the "sepulchre" introduces us to a solemn feature of the Easter service which essentially survives in the ceremony of veiling the crucifix above the altar from Holy Thursday to the first Evensong of Easter; closely connected with the Easter *Quem Quaeritis* was a ceremony in which the crucifix was solemnly buried on Good Friday and restored to the light on Easter day; a wooden sepulcher in which the crucifix was to be deposited was erected in a recess in the wall or upon a tomb; occasionally the crypt of the church was used for this purpose; some of the more ancient English churches still contain permanent stone structures which were built for the special purpose of serving as the sepulcher of the cross; some of these sepulchers are so large that they permit the entrance of the participants in the *Quem Quaeritis;* the temporary structures were so arranged that in the lower portion were effigies which appeared to be Roman guards asleep at their post.

The *Quem Quaeritis* is not the only Easter service which contains dramatic features. In one of these services the clergy

passing in procession to the High Altar met a group of five choristers, two of whom represented St. Peter and St. John, the other three taking the rôle of the three Marys. Their colloquy ran, in part as follows:

Apostoli: Dic nobis Maria
Quid vidisti in via.
Prima Maria: Sepulchrum Christi viventis
Et gloriam resurgentis.
Secunda Maria: Angelicos testes
Sudarium et vestes.
Tertia Maria: Surrexit Christus spes mea,
Praecedit vos in Galilaeam.
Apostoli: Credendum est magis soli
Mariae veraci . . .
Omnes: Scimus Christum surrexisse
a mortuis vere.
Tu nobis, victor Rex, miserere.
Apostles: "Tell us Mary what you saw along the road.
First Mary: The sepulchre of the living Christ
who was rising to glory.
Second Mary: We saw the angelical witnesses,
the napkin, and the grave garments.
Third Mary: Christ my hope has risen and
has preceded you into Galilee.
Apostles: We ought to believe the truthful
Mary alone. . . .
All: We know that Christ has really risen
from the dead; do, thou, O Victorious
King, have mercy upon us."

Still another dramatic service connected with Easter was that of Easter Monday known as the *Peregrini;* this service, established in the twelfth century, was observed in France and Germany as well as in England; the basis was the journey to Emmaus. We find the details varying somewhat in local observances; in one form of it Mary Magdalene appears; in another the Virgin Mary and the other Marys greet their risen Lord; occasionally the doubting Thomas appears. We have a

record of a combined Easter celebration including the *Quem Quaeritis*, the *Peregrini* and the ceremony of bringing out from the sepulchre the buried cross (known technically as *Elevatio Crucis*).

We can readily see how the dramatic elements of the church service, beginning with the Easter celebration, would sooner or later extend to other services; in the course of time into the observance of Christmas and Ascension Day were inserted dramatic tropes so closely modeled on that of Easter that even the words of the original *Quem Quaeritis* are in part borrowed *verbatim*, in part closely imitated. Thus in a Christmas trope found in a St. Gall manuscript we read: "*Quem Quaeritis in praesepe, pastores, dicite,*" evidently an imitation of the original words "*Quem Quaeritis in sepulchro, O Christicolae.*"

Here we have two sets of religious plays,—those of Easter and of Christmas, distinct in their specific themes yet closely connected in that they treat of two cardinal events in the life of Christ, and betray the consciousness of their common origin by an unmistakable similarity of language. It was only a question of time when these tropes should fuse; but during this waiting period each parent stock developed accretions; the Christmas trope began to work back toward the prophetic characters of the Old Testament and their inspired predictions; the Easter and Ascension plays began to look forward to the end of mundane things, to the Day of Judgment and the final overthrow of the anti-Christ. When, in the course of a century or more, the two sets had thoroughly coalesced, there had been created an all-embracing religious drama, ranging from the Garden of Eden to the Final Judgment.

Our first glimpse of a genuine English drama is in the fourteenth century; the two coöperating factors in this manifestation are the establishment of the festival of Corpus Christi and the evolution of the powerful trade guilds.

The observance of Corpus Christi owes its origin to a revelation which is said to have come to Juliana, a Cistercian of Liège. In 1264 Pope Urban IV determined to establish Corpus

Christi Day as a universal ecclesiastical festival, but he died before his plan could be officially adopted; for nearly 50 years the project was in abeyance until in 1311 it was officially confirmed by Clement V at the council of Vienne. The festival of Corpus Christi is an official recognition of the sacred doctrine of transubstantiation. The famous St. Thomas Aquinas drew up the order of service. The leading feature of this festival was a procession in which the host was carried through the streets and exhibited at various halting places.

For about two centuries (1182-1378) we are without detailed information of the history of religious plays within the city of London. When, however, we are able to trace once more their evolution we find that important changes had been going on during the interval. Beginning within the church as a part of the service of the mass and with the participation of the clergy, we find, at the end of the period, a performance in the town, distinct from the service of the sanctuary, carried on by the trade guilds and with no participation by the clergy. The services were, at first, held within the churches at Christmas and Easter; the crowds soon became so great that even the spacious ecclesiastical buildings could not contain them; recourse was next had to the churchyards adjacent to the church; but this entailed the sacrilege of trampling on the graves. At about this time, also, the ecclesiastical Latin of the service was finding a rival in the various vernaculars which brought the spoken words within the comprehension of the unlettered laity of whom the crowds were composed. The authorities had come to feel serious doubts about the propriety of the participation of the clergy in the service now held outside the sacred edifice and no longer connected with the mass; we have literary evidence that the clergy were forbidden to take part in the Miracles even in the churches; by this time the popularity of these plays had become so great that their continuation was assured even without the participation of the clergy. The trade guilds took up the service which the church had no desire to continue and we find ourselves introduced to the interesting history of the guild-conducted pageants.

A critic has remarked that keen as must be our regret over the loss of so many Miracle plays our grief should be tempered by the sobering fact that had they all been preserved we should be so overwhelmed by the huge pile of material that we would shrink from the task of studying and classifying it. We know that Miracle plays were acted through the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and we can trace this activity in more than one hundred and twenty-five places in Great Britain alone, to say nothing of a contemporary vogue in many places on the continent. In France, for example, there are still in existence manuscripts of Miracles so stupendously lengthy that no publisher has as yet had the courage to print them.

Confining ourselves as we must, through considerations of space, to English Miracle plays we find ourselves in the fortunate possession of four great cycles known as the Chester, the York, the Towneley, and the Coventry; in addition to these large groups we have one or more plays from Norwich, Northampton, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Shrewsbury, a small number in the Cornish language, and a few of unknown or doubtful origin.

None of these cycles are to be considered the work of a single writer; they are simply aggregations of plays supposedly produced in a certain town, the product of various hands; the plays of one cycle borrow freely from those of other groups; within a given cycle the individual plays were rewritten and subdivided to furnish opportunity for recently established guilds to display their histrionic skill. When the originality of the writers had been exhausted, the scarcity of fresh composition was supplied by a combination of two or more older plays.

Each of the four great cycles presents one or more features of special interest. The *Chester* is perhaps the oldest in date of composition, yet the extant manuscripts of this cycle are of more recent date than those of the other three. There is evidence that Miracles were performed at Chester as early as 1328; it is thought that the play of that year was written by Ranulph Higden, a celebrated scholar; if Higden was really

the author of this early work he may claim the distinction of being the only Miracle writer whom we can definitely name out of the vast number whose works have come down to us. Though we can perhaps trace the plays themselves to as early a period as 1328 the extant Chester manuscripts, five in number, are nearly three centuries younger, dating from 1591 to 1607.

The Chester plays manifest the common tendency to borrow from other cycles; even the wit and the pathos lack originality; and yet we must credit the authors with a judicious restraint in the exercise of their humor, a genuine devotion and a real effort to keep constantly before them the essentially religious basis of a miracle play.

Pollard [1] in his *English Miracle Plays* reprints in full two of the Chester plays,—*Noah's Flood* and *The Sacrifice of Isaac.* These selections admirably illustrate the pathos and the humor which are often so startlingly combined in the English miracles.

The quaint pathos of the *Sacrifice of Isaac* still grips the modern reader. When Abraham has made known to his son the dread command to offer him up as a sacrifice the boy replies:

> "Would God my mother were here with me!
> She would kneel down upon her knee,
> Praying you, father, if it may be,
> For to save my life."

In *Noah's Flood* we must assign to the patriarch's wife a high place in the world's collection of literary shrews. She refuses point blank to enter the ark unless she may have her "gossippes all." The sons finally carry their struggling mother bodily into the ark; as she enters Noah greets her: "Welckome, wiffe, into this botte." She returns his greeting with a vigorous slap in the face: "Have thou that for thy note!" To this love tap the much enduring husband replies: "Ha, ha! marye, this

[1] **English Miracle Plays, Pollard. Clarendon Press, Oxford.**

is hotte!" We can still hear, in imagination, the roar of laughter which greeted Noah's philosophical reflection:

> "Lorde, that wemen be crabbed aye,
> And none are meke, I dare well saye."

Authorities differ as to the comparative antiquity of the extant Chester and York cycles. Pollard assigns the priority to the York plays. Brooke speaking of the York cycle says: "The text of these plays seems to be a little earlier than that of the rest;" in another place he remarks of the Chester plays: "The Chester cycle appears to be the oldest in date of composition." In dating the York cycle "from about 1360" Pollard places them later than 1328, the date which Brooke assigns to the Chester plays. Miss Toulmin Smith refers the York cycle to the years 1340-1350. The plays of this group number forty-eight, with, in addition, a fragment of another play *The Coronation of our Lady.*

From the purely literary point of view the York plays are inferior, yet they are valuable from an historic and a linguistic standpoint. We miss in them the rough humor so characteristic of the other cycles; the absence of horse-play in this collection has been attributed to the censorship which was characteristic of York because of its high ecclesiastical position.

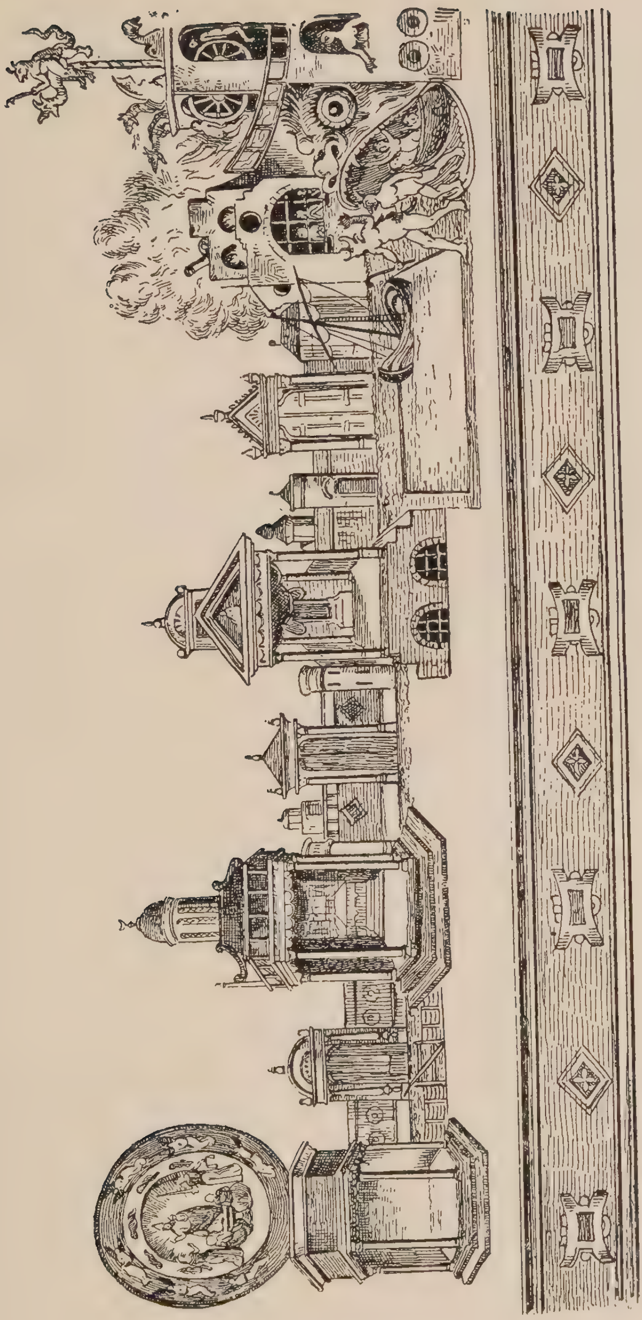
The York cycle is especially interesting for some detailed information which has come down to us from the year 1415 regarding the selection of guilds for the various features of the York pageants. An effort was made to assign so far as possible each pageant to the guild whose trade was most closely connected with the required scene. The pageant of the construction of the ark was assigned to the shipwrights; the ark afloat to the fishmongers; the nativity gifts of the three kings to the goldsmiths; the miracle of turning the water into wine to the vintners, the Lord's supper to the bakers; the rough humor of the period is shown in handing over to the tanners the punishment of Lucifer and the fallen angels in hell.

The Towneley cycle is often called the Wakefield cycle, taking its name from the town of Wakefield. It is, however,

usually called the Towneley from the fact that the only extant manuscript of the plays was for a long time in the possession of the Towneley family; the manuscript is now in private hands in Surrey, England. There is satisfactory manuscript evidence that the cycle is made up of plays presented in part at least by the trade guilds of Wakefield. There are thirty-two plays in the extant cycle; they date a little later than the York plays; their especially marked features are their originality and humor. We note the usual borrowings,—five of the plays are practically reproductions of an equivalent number of York plays. The distinguishing features of this cycle are the farcical elements and the realistic sketches of shepherd life. Two of the plays are pastoral studies. The second of these shepherd scenes is known technically as *secunda pastorum;* in it occurs the famous episode of the thief Mak, a farcical touch which overtops anything of the kind produced in England for the next one hundred and fifty years.

In taking up the Coventry cycle we must carefully distinguish between a group of plays, two in number, which are known as Coventry Guild Plays and a collection of forty-two which collectively are called *Ludus Coventriae.* The two guild plays are the sole survivors of an original cycle of ten; one of them, representing the birth of Jesus and the slaughter of the Innocents, was presented by the guild of shearmen and tailors; the other, portraying Christ before the Doctors in the temple, was in the charge of the weavers.

The so-called *Ludus Coventriæ,* consisting of forty-two plays, has been the cause of much discussion. Collectively they show peculiarities which sharply differentiate them from the other three cycles. They present the anomaly of requiring a fixed stage, side by side with clear proofs that they were intended for strolling companies; either of these peculiarities,—a fixed stage or strolling companies would serve to separate them from the great majority of guild plays which were presented on moving wagons and limited to the town with which the guilds were connected. The *Ludus Coventriae* plays were presented on a stationary platform, with the various localities



THE VALENCIENNES MYSTERY PLAY.

(known as *sedes*) all in sight at one time, precisely as in the early performances in the cathedrals all the places called for by the plays were simultaneously presented in various parts of the cathedral. This fixed setting was in marked contrast to the usual guild method of bringing up to the assembled spectators only one scene at a time and compelling them to wait for the arrival of the next installment. That this cycle was also intended for a company which moved from town to town is clearly shown by a preliminary announcement made by three advance agents (*vexillatores*) to the effect that on the following Sunday the play would be presented at six o'clock. This puzzling situation of a play presented on a fixed stage, yet moving from town to town has, of course, occasioned many learned discussions; Brooke offers the plausible explanation that the play was intended for presentation in a particular place on a fixed stage but that it subsequently fell into the hands of a company of strolling actors who presented the cycle or at least parts of it in various towns on a circuit.

That the cycle has no connection of any sort with Coventry seems generally agreed; Pollard argues from the diction, the meter, the general tone and other features that it is of northeastern Midlands origin rather than of Coventry.

A notable feature in this cycle is the introduction of allegorical personages strongly suggestive of the Moralities; the employment of such allegorical characters as *Veritas*, *Justicia*, *Misericordia* is not only an indication that the play is of late date, written at a time when the Moralities were about to replace the Miracles, but it serves as an interesting illustration of the gradual nature of the transition from the Miracle to the Morality. In the *Ludus Coventriae* we have hybrid forms, Miracles which contain a complete little Morality and plays which are neither sharply defined Miracles like the *Quem Quaeritis* nor clear-cut Moralities like the famous *Everyman*.

The motive of the guilds, in taking from the church the performances of the Miracles, was partly religious, partly commercial. The festival of Corpus Christi brought to town crowds of visitors; they naturally had occasion to spend a con-

siderable sum of money, a large percentage of which found its way into the coffers of the members of the various guilds. When the custom of a procession through the town had been instituted, the guilds began to present performances on a more elaborate scale than the church had found it possible to offer within the limited space of the cathedrals; by the time the Miracles had passed from the church into the management of the guilds, the primitive dramatic performances had become so expanded, so many component parts had been unified that they had developed into a great drama representing scriptural events from the creation to the final judgment.

It so happens that in the guild cycles which have come down to us the Corpus Christi dramatic presentations were processional, but we should guard against the conclusion that all guild plays were presented in this form. Chambers asserts that the processional was rarely employed outside of England; by numerous examples he proves that even in England there are records which indicate that it was not universal; in this chapter we have already mentioned the *Ludus Coventriae* as calling for a fixed stage; non-processional performances are known to have been given at Lincoln and other places. Nor is it true that the Miracle was at any period absolutely excluded from the church precincts, even though it may have been forbidden in the sacred edifice. As late as 1566, we read of a performance at Bungay in the churchyard; a century before, in 1452, of playing "at the church gate" in Harling; the last village play of which we have record, that of Hascombe, in 1579, was "at the church,"—an ambiguous expression, to be sure, which does not necessarily imply that the performance was within the edifice itself, but it does indicate a performance on ecclesiastic property.

We have gradually come to associate the word pageant with a procession, but we should not overlook the fact that etymologically the word has reference to the movable platform or stage on which the play was performed rather than to the procession itself. If proof of this were needed the stage directions of one of the extant plays would amply supply it:

"Here Herod shall rage *on the pagond* and also in the streete." This direction is also valuable as indicating that occasionally the actors came down from the "pageant" and acted in the street. Pageants, were, therefore, movable wagons upon which

TWO MEDIAEVAL PAGEANTS.

dramatic performances were given; they were usually of two stories; the lower floor, enclosed, served as a dressing room, the upper as the acting stage. These vehicles were drawn from place to place, sometimes by men, occasionally by horses, stopping at previously announced places, each pageant presenting the scene assigned to a particular guild; the wagon then moved

on to the next station, thus making room for a performance by the next pageant. By this processional method every citizen of even the largest towns could without moving from his chosen point of vantage conveniently witness an entire performance of even the longest cycle.

The properties were exceedingly simple. A very common device was Hell Mouth represented by a pair of open jaws painted red and belching smoke; from this Hell Mouth leaped the Devil crying "Ho! Ho!" Into the gaping aperture he thrust with his pitchfork the wicked and finally he himself plunged back to the infernal regions. Some attempt was made at appropriateness of costume; God was represented in white leather with gilded face and hair; the Devil was attired in black and equipped with the conventional horns, hoofs and a tail. Some very quaint items of expense have come down to us; among the costumes owned by the Norwich Grocers' Company in 1565 we note:—"two coats and a pair of stained hose for Eve." In Hull in 1494 "a pair of new mittens for Noah" cost fourpence.

The pageant plays were filled with what to modern eyes and ears seem strange anachronisms; thus, in the *Second Shepherds' Play* we find a quaint blending of Yorkshire setting and characters with Biblical personages and scenes. Mak the sheep snatcher is a redblooded English yokel; his wife refers glibly to the time marked by a clock; the indignant shepherds toss the thief in a blanket. Then, with startling suddenness, the fun is over; an angel sings the *Gloria in Excelsis*, we are in the Holy Land, the birth of the heavenly child is announced and the shepherds kneel in adoration; then a lovely closing touch, an anachronism to be sure, but who will cavil at the presents which the shepherds proffer the new born babe? One offers "a bob of cherries"; another has brought "a bird to my child"; the third presents a ball; "Have and play thee with all, and go to the tennis." It is this strange but fascinating mixture of the serious with the comic, the earthly with the heavenly that reveals the rich humanity of these nameless writers of the old miracle plays.

Chapter XXVIII

THE MORALITY

The student of evolution, whether in natural science or in literature, must guard against the instinctive tendency to arrange his material in neatly classified groups sharply differentiated chronologically and in subject matter from preceding and subsequent periods. The critical treatises on mediæval drama arrange their matter under the respective heads of Mysteries, Miracles, and Moralities; some such method of division is of course necessary or at least advisable, but the student must guard carefully against the conclusion that the three kinds of drama are entirely distinct both in form and in time. If, then, we say that the Moralities were younger than the Miracles we do not mean that the Morality is simply a later or degenerate form of the Miracle. In some of the later Miracles we find allegorical figures and in the chapter on Miracles we speak of one play of the *Ludus Coventriae* as containing a complete Morality in the form of a debate of the Virtues; likewise in the second version of the Norwich play of *The Fall* we note the allegorical characters *Dolor* and *Misery*. It is tempting to see in such plays a transition stage of development between the typical Miracle and the genuine Morality, but this conclusion would be unwarranted; at the most we can see in this combination a trace of the influence which at that time the Morality was exerting upon the later Miracle. That this theory of the independent origin of the Morality is held by competent scholars may be easily shown. *The Cambridge History of English Literature* (*V21*) says: "It is clearly erroneous to suppose that the English moralities grew gradually out of the mysteries and miracles under the coöperating influence of the pageants." Tatlock and Martin:[1] "Though the Morality

[1] Representative English Plays, Tatlock & Martin, Century Co., N. Y.

is a younger type than the Miracle, it must not be thought of as an evolution from the Miracle play. The Morality was in all probability of independent origin, springing up apparently about the beginning of the 15th century." Brooke also recog-

EVERYMAN. FAÇADE OF THE CATHEDRAL AT SALZBURG.
Everyman was performed on the steps of this Cathedral.

nizes the independent origin of the Morality although the precise nature of this origin is beyond his ken: "Besides the Mystery there had grown up, precisely whence or how no man can say, another form of religious drama: the Morality or moral play."

If, then, we should not seek the origin of the Morality in the Miracle the question at once suggests itself, "Whence did it arise?" Brooke as we have said, professes ignorance of its origin and the date of its beginning. Tatlock and Martin in the passage cited assign the beginning to the early 15th century; Professor Nicoll contents himself with saying that "Some century and a half after the Miracles had first become

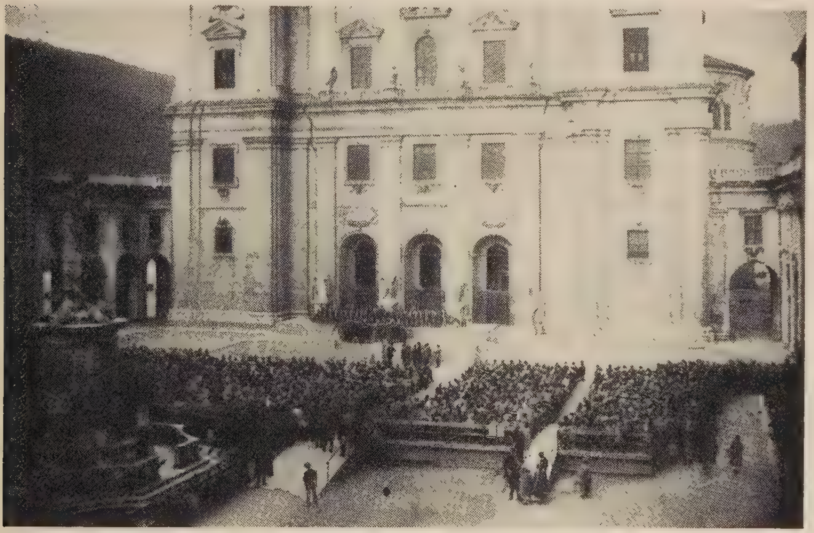
STAGE OF THE EVERYMAN PERFORMANCE AT SALZBURG.
The performance took place on the steps of the Cathedral.

an established form, the Morality play makes its definite appearance."

As to the literary origin of the Morality there seems to be a concerted tendency to find it in the innate or acquired love of allegory. Dr. Ward in the *Cambridge History of English Literature* makes the curious comment that though there is nothing in the English mind which predisposes it to a love of allegory, that mind when once it has grasped an idea or developed a tendency holds fast to it with racial tenacity.

It was under these conditions that the allegory took fast hold of the English mind; they had become familiar with it in their close contact with the Bible; the parables, the symbols,

the allegories of that book thoroughly prepared them for a form of literature in which allegorical figures, many of which were already familiar, took on a distinctly dramatic form. In France the native taste had been fed by the famous *Roman de la Rose* and its numerous successors. The English had in their "Vision" concerning *Piers the Plowman* their own allegorical counterpart of the French *Roman de la Rose*.



FAÇADE OF THE CATHEDRAL AT SALZBURG.
Showing actors and audience.

We may, therefore, find the origin of the Morality,—not in either of the other dramatic forms (the Mystery and the Miracle) but in the innate or acquired love of allegory which dominated mediaeval literature down to the time of the Renaissance and the Reformation.

Allegory was gradually driven out of secular writing by the realism which invaded English literature from Italy. By the time Chaucer (about 1340-1400) had reached his prime the new realism of Italy had nearly replaced allegory in English secular writing; in fact it did not appear again to any extent in English secular writing until Spenser (about 1552-

1559) revitalized it. Driven out of English secular literature but still familiar to those acquainted with the Bible, it found its last refuge in the religious drama.

The ordinary name for this species of drama was "moral plays", or "Moralities". In the time of Wyclif (14th century) the species was known as "Paternoster" plays. We know that the term "Morality" was employed as early at least as 1503. Chambers cut the word down to the briefer form "Morals".

If we were to quote a dozen definitions of the Morality as compared with the Mystery and the Miracle we should find them all containing the word "allegory" as distinguishing the Morality from the other forms of religious drama. Additional characteristics, as stated by the authorities, are: Employment of abstractions or symbols or personifications. The critics agree, further, in attributing to the Morality a distinctly didactic purpose. These various definitions are neatly summed up by Mr. W. R. Mackenzie in his *The English Moralities*, "A play allegorical in structure, which has for its main object the teaching of some lesson for the guidance of life, and in which the principal characters are personified abstractions or highly universalized types." This definition expresses admirably the difference between a Mystery, a Miracle, and a Morality. The writer of a Mystery found his theme already provided in the Bible; the lives of the saints provided ready-made material for the writer of a Miracle; the writer of a Morality might find in the allegories of the Bible a suggestion for his own work, but he was thrown upon his own inventive resources for the development of the suggestion. The author of a Morality had some advantages over his rivals who wrote the other forms of religious plays, but he also suffered from some serious disadvantages. He had an opportunity to show originality in plot and dialogue; the conflict of opposing moral forces furnished the element of struggle which has ever been so fascinating to theater audiences. These advantages were more than counterbalanced by the defects of the *genre;* the opportunity for originality was very limited after all; at any rate the writers of the Morality soon began to repeat the themes of previous

MAX REINHARDT.

Producer of *Everyman*.

writers; the range of topics in the extant Moralities is strikingly narrow; play after play repeated the old themes until the later audiences yawned. The fundamental characteristic of the Morality,—allegory and abstract personalities is lacking in vitality. The Mysteries and the Miracles were personal and of human appeal; the story of Noah, of Isaac, and of Christ, the experiences of St. Katharine and St. Nicholas were vastly more vivid than the doings of *Mundus, Avaritia,* and *Voluptas.* Pollard states admirably the critical argument against the Morality: "In itself, as tending to didacticism, and unreality, personification is wholly undramatic, and the popularity of the later Morality significantly coincides with the dullest and most barren period in the history of English literature."

Mr. W. R. Mackenzie classifies Moralities under four heads:

1. Those which represent a struggle between vices and virtues for supremacy or for the conquest of the human soul.
2. Those designed to explain or illustrate a specific Bible text.
3. Those which give warning of the approach of death.
4. Those which favor one of the contending parties in a political or religious debate.

In illustration of the first class we have the famous *Castle of Perseverance;* of the second, *All For Money*, illustrating the Bible text, "The love of money is the root of all evil"; of the third class, which is sparsely represented, we have the well-known play *Everyman;* the fourth is represented by Sir David Lyndsay's *A Satire of the Three Estates* in which the author attacks the abuses which he claims existed in church and state.

This fourth class is of special interest because it proves that the themes of the Morality were not selected exclusively from matters pertaining to the spiritual nature of man; some of the Moralities of this class were intended to popularize the new learning of the Renaissance. John Skelton's *Magnificence* (printed about 1529) is more didactic than religious; it is distinctly humanistic in tone, emphasizing the foolishness of a

lavish expenditure of money and the folly of placing absolute confidence in friends who will fail in a crisis.

It is difficult to point out any permanent molding influence of the early religious plays on Elizabethan tragedy although we find sporadic traces of such an influence; in Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* for example, we have a conflict between good and evil angels which is strongly suggestive of the "conflict" Moralities of the first class. Marlowe critics, however, insist that this was a deliberate borrowing for this particular play and not to be regarded as indicating any distinct influence of the Moralities on Marlowe. This distinction between a "borrowing" and an "influence" will probably strike the ordinary reader as a verbal quibble. It is, however, strangely difficult to detect any abiding influence of the early religious plays on English tragedy. The Biblical themes of the Mysteries, the lives of the saints as shown in the Miracles, the awe-inspiring theme of the Morality *Everyman* might well have furnished fruitful themes to the Elizabethan dramatists, but we look in vain in Marlowe and Shakespeare for subjects directly suggested by the English religious plays. We frequently find in critical treatises on Elizabethan drama an attempt to see in Shakespeare's fools and clowns a lineal descendant of the *Vice* of the morality plays.[1] Professor Gayley explicitly rejects this theory. He says that in the Moralities the *Vice* never appears either as a clown or as a fool; in certain of the Moralities we even find a clown side by side with *Vice* and entirely distinct from him; in fact, the *Vice* sometimes deliberately furthers his own sinister plans by using the clown as a tool. It is therefore wrong, Professor Gayley thinks, to regard Shakespeare's clown as merely a later form of the *Vice* of the Moralities: "Though the *Vice* did not turn clown, the clown imperceptibly usurped qualities of the vanishing *Vice*."

When however we come to comedy we have a different story to tell. He would be indeed a rash critic who should endeavor to make English comedy a direct descendant of the religious plays and reject all other sources; the foreign influ-

[1] Representative English Comedies, C. M. Gayley, Macmillan Co.

ences were far too numerous and heterogeneous to permit exclusive attribution to a single origin. If one must find a single source of English comedy it is easier to discover it in the Latin classical writers than in the English religious dramatists. The authors of the *Cambridge History of English Literature* seem willing to make this claim: "It was from the classical revival and the neo-Latin drama which followed in its wake that English comedy, in the full sense, finally sprang." Professor Gayley in one of his chapters appears to accept this theory of the classical origin of English comedy: "Miracle plays and Marvels and Moralities were a propædeutic to comedy rather than tragedy." "A propædeutic" but not the "exclusive propædeutic," as Professor Gayley himself explicitly states in another more detailed enumeration of sources; between 1570 and 1590 we find, for instance, a markedly romantic element in English drama. The classical and the romantic elements are important but even they do not exhaust the list of tributaries which collectively constituted the broad stream of English comedy; the full list according to Professor Gayley includes scriptural, allegorical, farcical, pastoral, romantic, classical and purely native English material. In this chapter we are interested only in tracing the influence of the English religious plays,—the Mysteries, the Miracles and the Moralities upon English comedy. That this influence is unmistakable may easily be shown; in the Mysteries we have, for instance, the farcical element of the shepherd Mak in the *Secunda Pastorum* and the comic Noah's-wife scene in the *Noah's Flood* Mystery; in the *Saints' Play of St. Nicholas*, "a jovial saint" as Professor Gayley calls him, we find ourselves more than once over the boundary which separates the comic from the serious.

Again and again in this early religious drama we find at the most serious moments the grotesque or the jocular introduced in a way which is sometimes shocking to modern reverence; the murder of Abel beginning with due solemnity ultimately passes into the comic. In the Moralities examples of the comic abound; the *Wyt and Science* of John Redford, dating

RICHES.

As played in Reinhardt's production of *Everyman*.

from about the middle of the 16th century is, as Pollard says of it, or rather of the later play for which it served as a model,—*The Marriage of Wit and Science* (1570), "a really amusing play, very brightly and trippingly written, with scarcely a bad line in it." Nor should we omit what Gayley calls the purely native element in English comedy. One of the finest things about this early comedy as well as early English tragedy is the sturdy native element which shines through all the foreign borrowings; our earliest English tragedy, *Gorboduc*, is based in technique upon a classical pattern but the theme is native British; our early comedies *Ralph Roister Doister* and *Gammer Gurton's Needle* were patterned after Latin comedies but there is an incorrigible native humor permeating the entire plays. Strangely disconcerting, sometimes, are the unexpected bursts of robust English humor at the most inappropriate times; in the *Second Shepherds' Play*, one of the shepherds advises Mak to: "take out that southern tooth," —the contemptuous jibe of an Englishman at another Englishman who comes from a different part of the country; in the mystery of *Noah's Flood* the patriarch's wife suggests that her spouse have his shoes patched that they may last longer:

"Yea, Noah, go clout thy shoon; the better will they last."

Noah pauses in his hasty construction of the ark to moralize over the proper treatment of a wife:

> "Ye men that has wives, while they are young,
> If ye love your lives, chastise their tongue."

A concrete example of the difference of flavor between the expression of an identical sentiment in two widely separated languages is the pithy proverb in the *Second Shepherds' Play:*

> "Kind will creep where it may not go" (nature will creep where it may not walk, that is,—"nature will show itself in its true colors").

The classical scholar will recall the Roman Horace's manner of expressing the same sentiment:

> *Naturam expelles furca, tamen usque recurret.* (You may drive out nature with a pitchfork,—back she will come.)

THE APPROACH OF DEATH.
Alexander Moissi as *Everyman*.

Substantially the same sentiment, but note the national twist to each,—one is characteristically Latin, the other unmistakably native English. There can be no reasonable doubt that the virile boisterous humor which breaks out so unexpectedly in the earliest religious drama continued without a break in English comedy long after the last Mystery and Miracle and Morality had disappeared from public sight.

Most readers find the Moralities exceedingly dull; though a few of the plays, notably *Everyman*, are serious and contain some good workmanship, they as a whole appeal chiefly to those specialists whose interest is scientific rather than literary. The writers were evidently fully conscious that in their employment of theological and religious characters and themes they were competing with the Mystery and Miracle writers; but these forms of drama had the great advantage of dealing with flesh and blood characters,—the heroes and heroines of the Bible, and the saints whose lives and martyrdom and subsequent intervention in human affairs appealed to every man and woman. In a literary rivalry between St. Nicholas and the *Seven Deadly Sins* the human character was almost certain to gain the attention. The only hope of the Morality writers was to cultivate the robust and the farcical features which so delighted the yokels of whom the audiences were largely composed; but even in this attempt they found themselves outstripped by the Miracle writers who introduced into their treatment of Biblical and saint themes features which, though occasionally hilarious, too often shock our modern delicacy.

Our earliest extant complete Morality is the *Castle of Perseverance* which probably dates from about 1425; this is however not the earliest of which we have record. As far back as the fourteenth century we have reference in Wyclif's own words to a so-called "Paternoster" play in English, brought out at York in 1378 in which vices and sins were condemned and virtues were praised; this personification of vices and virtues is clearly in the style of the orthodox Morality. The date of this play (about 1378) is of much importance, because it indicates the existence of Moralities at a period only fifty years

ALEXANDER MOISSI.

As Orestes in the *Iphigeneia Among the Taurians* of Euripides.

later than our earliest recorded Mystery play,—that at Chester in 1328.

In addition to this lost *Paternoster Play* or *Play of the Lord's Prayer*, as it is sometimes called, we have also traces of another play called *A Creed Play*, also performed at York on various occasions between 1483 and 1568. Pollard thinks that this *Creed Play* was a Morality rather than a Miracle. Other *Paternoster Plays* which from the description of the allegorical characters (*The Seven Deadly Sins*, *Vicious*) were clearly Moralities, are known to have been given, at Lincoln (1397-1398) and Beverley (1469). These facts and these early dates clearly prove the existence side by side from very early times of the Mysteries and the Moralities as distinct species of dramatic composition.

We have spoken of the *Castle of Perseverance* as the earliest extant complete Morality. Earlier still, however, than the *Castle of Perseverance* is a fragmentary Morality dating probably from the beginning of the 15th century. Though it is preserved in an Irish manuscript there are clear indications of English authorship. The theme, the coming of Death, places it under the third of our enumerated classes. The title, *Pride of Life*, has been given to it in recent times. The characters though allegorical,—*Mirth*, or semi-symbolical,—*King*, *Queen*, *Bishop*—have some personal touches which distinguish this Morality from those containing purely allegorical characters.

Two of the extant Moralities, *The Castle of Perseverance* and *Everyman* deserve a more detailed consideration: *The Castle of Perseverance* because of its seniority among extant Moralities; *Everyman* because of its weighty subject and excellent technique.

The *Castle of Perseverance* is an example of what Mr. Mackenzie calls the first class,—the conflict of vices and virtues. The play treats of the career of man from his birth to his appearance before the judgment seat. The conflict is between the seven cardinal virtues which defend mankind, and the seven deadly sins which attack the castle wherein he has

HELENE THIMIG.

A German Actress in *Everyman*

taken refuge. After passing through many vicissitudes, during which he falls into the power of the sins of the world, Mankind, in poverty and awaiting death, is in abject terror concerning the fate of his soul. The play closes with a debate of the Virtues before the *Pater sedens in trono.* Justice demands the condemnation of the trembling mortal; Mercy appeals for leniency in the name of Christ. The plea of Mercy is successful and the supreme judge decides in favor of the culprit.

The play is not without interest to the student of early English; the quaint spelling, the unmistakable earnestness of the writer, the appeal to every human traveler on the journey of life attract and for a while hold the attention; but only a resolute reader can give unwavering attention throughout this formidably long play of thirty-five hundred lines, equivalent to about six books of Homer's *Iliad*, or two entire Greek tragedies. Then too, the reader has to force himself to overlook the marked lack of distinction in the diction and the all too frequent sacrifice of clearness to hackneyed alliteration (frequently occurring examples are: *bydde a bone; strete and stalle; fen and flode*).

The directions for staging this Morality as given in the manuscript are notably full and deserve careful attention, because even at this early period we may detect some features which were later to develop into marked characteristics of the Elizabethan theater. The play was intended to be given out of doors; the stage was circular and was to be surrounded by water if conditions permitted; otherwise it was to be barred entirely around; in either case the purpose was to keep the spectators from encroaching upon the scene of the play. Here we note an anticipation of the objectionable custom of later Elizabethan times when spectators were allowed to crowd upon the stage. The manuscript forbids the presence of too many stage managers (stytelerys) within the enclosure and prohibits all persons from sitting upon the walls of the castle lest they obstruct the view of the spectators who surrounded the stage on all sides. It will at once be seen how markedly this style of production differed from that of the Mysteries. The Mysteries

FRANZISKA KINZ, IN "EVERYMAN" AT SALZBURG.

were performed by amateurs on wagons which moved from place to place but within the limits of a single village or town; *The Castle of Perseverance* was produced by actors, more or less professional, who were engaged in a business enterprise. Advance agents (*vexillatores*) seem to have gone ahead of the company, a week or so before each exhibition, passing through the villages in a given neighborhood, and calling attention to some central spot where the play was to be performed. The manuscript indicates that the play required thirty-six actors (*ludores*). If the company really travelled from town to town, it is difficult to understand how the receipts could cover the salaries of so large a group; probably the permanent troupe numbered fewer than thirty-six, and at each place of performance extras were hired.

We come last to the Morality which may be regarded as by far the greatest of all extant plays of that species. *Everyman* fully conforms to the definition of a Morality: It is allegorical, it teaches a moral lesson. The emphasis which it lays upon the sacred doctrines and the ritual of the church is clear evidence of scholarly and probably clerical authorship. There is general agreement that *Everyman* is of Dutch rather than of English origin. There is a Dutch Morality, bearing a title the exact equivalent of the English *Everyman,—Elckerlijk.* Our English play was probably derived from this Dutch original. We know that the Dutch play was printed a few years earlier than the English. One argument for the foreign origin of the English *Everyman* is that all the other English Moralities are clearly interrelated, borrowing from one another; our *Everyman* stands quite apart from all the other Moralities, neither borrowing from any other nor exerting any discernible influence. Another argument for the Dutch Morality as the original of the English rather than the reverse is that certain passages of the Dutch Morality are written in complicated meters, whereas in the English play, the meters are greatly simplified; it is more likely that the copyist simplified the complex meters of the Dutch than that he made more complicated in a Dutch translation the simplicity of the original English meters.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE INTERLUDE

IN his *Tudor Drama* [1] Tucker Brooke defines an Interlude as: "A short play exhibited by professionals at the meals of the great or on other occasions where, later, *masques* would have been fashionable." Mr. Brooke thinks that this was the significance attached to the word in Tudor times.

The Interlude was partly a continuation of the Morality partly a contrast to it. The abstractions of the old Morality passed over into the Interlude, but individual concrete characters now begin to appear; these human characters finally superseded the abstractions which had come down from the Moralities.

The stickler for classification will find his ingenuity taxed when he attempts to show the exact difference between a Morality and an Interlude. Mr. Brooke frankly admits the impossibility of establishing a fixed boundary line between the two forms. From a very early time the names were freely interchanged; the Morality entitled *The World and the Child*, dating from the reign of Henry VII (1485-1509) is called by the printer *A New Interlude;* this is but one of the many examples of the habit which authors as well as printers had acquired of applying the term *Interlude* to works which were genuine Moralities. Mr. E. K. Chambers [2] claims that the word Interlude was used as early as the fourteenth century for a dramatic performance of any kind. Not only were the titles Morality and Interlude confused, but we find the distinctive features of each species appearing occasionally in the other; to cite a single example: the sixteenth century *Hycke-*

[1] The Tudor Drama, Tucker Brooke, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston.

[2] The Mediæval Stage, E. K. Chambers, Oxford University Press, 1903.

scorner, essentially a genuine Morality, shows a tendency to expand the comic element beyond the limits previously permissible in genuine Moralities. Pollard [1] who follows the example of those who consider the Morality and the Interlude closely related calls *Hyckescorner* "one of the earliest specimens of the New Moralities"; the reader will find it helpful to keep in mind this application of the term "New Morality" to what we shall hereafter call the Interlude. Allardyce Nicoll [2] agrees with Tucker Brooke that the two species blend so freely in their characteristics that it is impossible clearly to differentiate them.

The word Interlude has therefore never been sharply defined; despite the fact that certain of its literary characteristics can be determined we cannot draw a clear dividing line between the Interlude and the Morality. Professor Nicoll finds the sole hope of differentiation in applying the term Interlude to certain plays of a realistic sort such as we shall describe when we reach the name of John Heywood.

Attempts to base a definition of Interlude upon the etymology of the word have not been successful. The basic root words are *ludus* (a play) and *inter* (between or among). Between (or among) what? Persons? Plays? Both interpretations have been offered. Some scholars claim that an Interlude is a *play* in dialogue form *between* two or more actors; others that it is a *play* introduced *to fill up the pauses* in a festivity or a business meeting. Pollard accepts the first interpretation and rejects the second although it has had the greater vogue. Nicoll endeavors to prove that the second meaning, (a play introduced to fill up the pauses between other entertainments or business) was a preferred interpretation among early writers.

Leaving undecided the question of the root meaning of the word we can point to at least one cause of the gradually increasing practical distinction between a Morality and an Interlude; it seems to have been the need of furnishing an entertainment suited to the finer minds of the higher classes of Eng-

[1] English Miracle Plays. Pollard. Clarendon Press, Oxford. 1914.
[2] British Drama, Allardyce Nicoll. Thomas Y. Crowell Co., New York.

lish society,—the titled nobles, and the intellectual aristocrats of the universities. It has been remarked by Mr. Brooke that whereas the Mystery play was the favorite of the middle classes, the Morality the amusement of the lower stratum, the Interlude was essentially aristocratic. The Interlude marks a transition of drama from the public streets and the village greens to the stately halls of the universities and the palaces of the rich.

The change was not merely one of place; the new location symbolized a new audience which sought amusement rather than religious edification. In the kind of entertainment desired by these exclusive classes, we see one cause of the growing distinction between a Morality and an Interlude; as the strictly religious features relaxed and a lighter vein appeared the old designation Morality lost its pertinency and a newer and more appropriate term seemed desirable; by the beginning of Elizabeth's reign (1558) the term Morality had so far fallen into disuse that Interlude had practically taken its place.

That the old type of Morality may have continued until the reign of Henry VIII (1509-1547) may be inferred from a legal document dating from about 1530 where a distinction is made between "summer plays" and "winter plays"; the summer plays are designated as "stage plays", the winter plays as "Interludes". Brooke interprets "summer plays" as meaning outdoor performances of the old Morality type, acted on a public stage before great audiences in the open air; he thinks that the "winter plays" were indoor performances in the halls of the universities and the palaces of the nobility. From the attested fact that the same costumes were worn by the actors in both performances it is a fair inference that the plays were substantially the same; this may indicate that the so-called "Interludes" of 1530 were really the old style Morality transferred from the open air stage of summer to the indoor stage of winter.

Even after the Interlude had introduced individual characters in place of the ethical abstractions of the genuine Morality we find clear evidence that for some time after the begin-

ning of the cleavage between the old Morality and the new Interlude the latter retained marked traces of the plot structure of the original Morality.

We are now in a position to form a clearer conception of the difference between a typical Morality and a genuine Interlude. The Morality was essentially religious; it appealed chiefly to the lower and uneducated classes; it contained an occasional coarseness which was welcome to its unrefined auditors; it was given outdoors. The Interlude attracted the intellectual and social élite; it was presented at purely social gatherings or on occasions of public festivities; it softened or cast entirely aside the strictly didactic and religious tone of the Morality; it was performed indoors.

We still have dramatic material sufficiently extensive to permit us to trace the gradual widening of the gap between the old Morality and the new Interlude. As early as the reign of Henry VII (1485-1509) we note that although the employment of abstractions continued, their nature changed from the purely moral tone of the old Moralities to intellectual ideas. Brooke cites as an example of the new type the play *Nature* by Medwall, the chaplain of Cardinal Morton; this play combines some of the essentials of the old Morality with the new Renaissance spirit; the discussion is ethical rather than religious. This is but one of several of the new "Educational Interludes" as Brooke styles them.

The well known *Hyckescorner* has been variously styled "one of the earliest specimens of the new Moralities" (Pollard); and "a reduced and secularized Morality" (Brooke); "in the main a morality, yet showing a clear development toward the greater elaboration of purely comic elements," (Nicoll).

As we advance in our study of the Interlude we find a controversial religious element manifesting itself more and more strongly; the Interlude faithfully reflected the ebb and flow of popular opinion during the great religious struggle of the sixteenth century in England. We have spirited specimens representing each side of the great controversy; as examples

of this polemical literature we may cite *The Interlude of Youth* and *Lusty Juventus* which present their arguments so earnestly that the purely dramatic features of the plays suffer. All through the latter part of the reign of Henry VIII (1509-1547) and the short rule of the two immediate predecessors of Elizabeth, Edward VI (1547-1553) and Mary (1553-1558), successive Interludes were championing or attacking the various contending parties.

We can detect and date the early symptoms of the coming decline of the Interlude. During the reigns of Edward VI and Mary it served as the weapon of the warring controversialists; with the accession of Elizabeth (1558) the changing literary tastes began to find expression in new forms of drama. All through the long reign of Elizabeth (1558-1603) we find the Interlude too strongly intrenched to be ousted by the newer forms; but the signs of decadence are unmistakable; the old themes were worn threadbare. Precisely as in the Alexandrine period of Greek Literature the original creative spirit of the Greeks had degenerated into a feeble copying and imitation of the great originals, so in the last stages of the Interlude the original themes, never very abundant, were endlessly rehandled and imitated until their vitality had ebbed and popular interest had vanished.

We need not linger long over the futile efforts of the waning species to prolong its life by an infusion of foreign blood; John Heywood introduced some new features from the French farce of the period; the Latin drama then in vogue on the continent was also drawn on by the writers of English interludes.

Early in Elizabeth's reign an effort at novelty was made by combining with the old allegorical figures real historic characters from English history; a striking example of this new tendency was Bale's *King John* which we shall examine later. Still another attempt to widen the narrow range of the Interlude may be seen during the reign of Henry VIII. The source of the play which is known to us as *Calisto and Melibea* is a Spanish novel *Celestina;* this play, which is specified in

the title as *An Interlude* is practically a love story with a striking absence of the conventional allegorical characters.

We can trace sporadic appearances of the moribund Interlude as late as 1634, during the reign of Charles I (1625-1649) when Thomas Nabbe's *Microcosmus* appeared. Even when the Interlude had begun to drop out of sight in the later years of Queen Elizabeth and James I we find indubitable traces of the continued influence of the Morality in the works of Marlowe (*Doctor Faustus*), Greene (*Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*), Nash, Peele, Lodge, and Shakespeare.

Of the numerous writers of Interludes two, John Heywood and John Bale, stand out so prominently that they deserve detailed consideration. John Heywood, "Merry John Heywood", as the nickname ran, was born either in London or in North Mimms, Hertfordshire (authorities differ). The year of his birth was 1497, if we may rely upon a letter which he wrote in 1575 from Malines, Belgium, to Lord Burleigh; in this letter he says that he is an old man of 78. This statement establishes the date of his birth as 1497. That he came of a good family is attested by the fact that he was not only a personal friend of Sir Thomas More the famous author of *Utopia* but he enjoyed the favor of Henry VIII and his daughter Mary; some scholars think that it was More who presented Heywood to Queen Mary; we know that in 1538 Heywood "played an interlude with his children" before the princess Mary. (She did not come to the throne until 15 years later). Of his wife we are told that before her marriage she was Joan Rastell and that her father John Rastell, a well known printer whose name frequently occurs in the annals of that period, was a brother-in-law of Sir Thomas More.

Heywood, like John Bale, was a university man, though they studied at rival universities,—Heywood at Broadgate Hall (now Pembroke College), Oxford, and Bale at Jesus College, Cambridge.

Becoming involved in the controversies of the day, he was suspected of treason during the reign of Edward VI and barely escaped with his life. Under Elizabeth his position was so in-

secure that in 1564, when Elizabeth had appointed a commission to enforce the act of uniformity, he thought it prudent to retire from England and take refuge in Belgium. The date and the place of his death are unknown or at least uncertain; he is said to have died at Mechlin where he had settled after leaving England; Nicoll, with no suggested doubt, gives the year 1580 as the date of his death; Brooke assigns 1580 conjecturally; the writer in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* says, frankly, that the date of his death is unknown.

The fame which Heywood acquired as a writer of Interludes leads the casual reader to think of him as devoting himself exclusively to that branch of literature; it is a fact however that he gave some attention to other forms of composition and that he produced proverbs, epigrams, ballads and especially a lengthy allegory *The Spider and the Fly* extending to the great length of over 7000 lines. These works we may dismiss with this brief notice because we are here concerned solely with his dramatic works,—the Interludes; nor should we overlook the fact that he put his best efforts into these plays.

There is considerable doubt regarding the authorship of some of the plays which at various times have been credited to him. We have the authority of the writer in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* that four of these were definitely ascribed to him in printed editions:—*The Foure P. P.; The Play of Love; The Play of the Weather; The Dialogue of Wit and Folly.* Two other plays which bear no name in the printed edition are: *The Merry Play between the Pardoner and the Frere, the Curate and Neighbour Pratte;* and *The Play between John the husband, Tyb the wife, and Sir John the priest.* In these two pieces there seem to be unmistakable traces of the influence of Sir Thomas More, yet we are not justified in definitely excluding these plays from the list of genuine Heywood plays. To our list we may add for the sake of completeness the *Dialogue of Gentylness and Nobylyte;* of the genuineness of this production, however, Mr. Pollard expresses considerable doubt.

To present a full abstract of these various works would

take us too far afield. The title of *The Play of Love* indicates its content,—*irae amantium;* in *The Play of the Weather* Jupiter finds himself baffled in his attempt to suit everybody's taste regarding the weather; a henpecked husband forms the theme of the *Play between John the husband, Tyb the wife, and Sir John the Priest;* in the *Pardoner and the Frere* we have a debate between a preaching Frere and a Pardoner who exhibits some remarkable relics.

Heywood is best known to modern students by his vastly amusing *The Four P P.* Every student knows the story, but perhaps it may survive one more repetition. A Palmer, a Pardoner, a Potycary, and a Peddler, (the four P's), meet and engage in a story telling contest, the prize to go to the one who can tell the biggest lie. The Pardoner, the Potycary, and the Peddler relate some wondrous experiences, which excite not only the incredulity but the risibility of the other members of the quartette; but the Palmer hushes them all into awed silence when he calmly asserts that in all his journeyings as a Palmer he had never seen a woman lose her temper. There was nothing more to be said. The prize went to the Palmer.

John Bale, an Englishman (1495-1563) is an interesting example of the clerical dramatist of that period. The theological controversies of the sixteenth century find their echoes in the drama of that day; the observant reader can often detect under the fictitious names of the *dramatis personæ* real historical characters.

Bale, like his theological and dramatic antagonist Heywood, was a university man. Entering at twelve a Carmelite Monastery, he found his way later to Jesus College, Cambridge. He aroused vehement controversies by his public utterances; for a time he found a powerful protector in the statesman Thomas Cromwell but after Cromwell's execution he had no friends at court and he was obliged to flee for his life to Germany; there he remained for seven years (1540-1547). Upon the death of Henry VIII conditions seemed propitious and he returned. After a term of clerical service as a Rector he was advanced to the Bishopric of Ossory in Ireland. His vehement

participation in the controversies of the day endangered his life; on the accession of Mary in 1553 he found it advisable to leave the country for a second time; he chose as his place of sojourn the city of Basle, Switzerland, where he remained until the end of Mary's reign (1558); the year following, on his return, he was given a clerical position in Canterbury Cathedral and after four years of comparative peace he ended in 1563 what had been a tumultuous life crowded with stirring events. We need not catalogue the opprobrious taunts flung at him by his controversial foes; he was as capable as they of coining scathing epithets, but the genius who dubbed him *Bilious Bale* labeled him for all time.

We should not think of Bale as exclusively a dramatist. The general term "polemical writer" better covers his literary activity as a whole. Those who are curious regarding his non-dramatic productions will find in Pollard's *English Miracle Plays* a list of titles with a brief critique of each work.

His dramatic work consisted of a series of twenty-two religious plays, only five of which have survived. The extant dramas bear the titles: *A Tragedy or Interlude Manifesting the Chief Promises of God unto Man; A Brief Comedy or Interlude of John the Baptist; A Comedy Concerning Three Laws; The Temptation of our Lord; King John (Kynge Johan).* The first four of these plays may be briefly characterized as conforming to the general type of the old Moralities but containing vigorous comments reflecting the controversial temper of the period of composition. For instance, *The Interlude of John the Baptist* is brought up to 1538 by its partisan invectives against the party to which he was opposed.

We have reserved for special comment Bale's *King John* which contains references pointing to a later period of composition than the other four in the extant list; we find a reference to "our late King Henry" which would indicate a date subsequent to 1547, the year of the death of Henry VIII; still another reference, *Englande hath a queene,* clearly indicating Queen Elizabeth, makes it certain that this sentence at least was written after her accession in 1558. On the other

hand Bale mentions this play in his *Summary of the Famous Writers of Great Britain* (*Illustrium Majoris Britanniæ Scriptorum Summarium)* which was written in 1548. The apparent discrepancy in dates may be explained by the supposition that Bale wrote his first draft when he returned from Germany in 1547 and revised the play after Elizabeth's accession in 1558.

In criticizing this Interlude we must, of course, consider it in its latest revised form as it has come down to us; the reference to Elizabeth clearly throws the play in part at least under the early years of the reign of that sovereign. Mr. Brooke handles cleverly the dramatic innovations which took place during the opening years of Elizabeth's reign. One of the most momentous of these new features was the insertion of real historical characters into a cast consisting chiefly of allegorical figures. At this moment men were craving something new, something vital, something adjusted to the times, yet they could not bring themselves to turn their backs squarely upon the past and to throw the Morality into the discard. The result was a new form of drama, a hybrid. Bale's *King John* illustrates admirably this dramatic novelty; we find in it real historical characters (*King John*), personifications (*England the Widow*), characters (*sedition, private wealth, civil order, usurped power*) some of which are purely allegorical, others merely transparent masks of living personages of the day. Such a hodgepodge shocks the classicist; the seeker after novelty is mildly amused and entertained. Critics make the best of the situation by insisting that the startlingly crude experiment ultimately worked out for the good of English drama; that out of the combination of the universal note of the old Morality and the concrete element of living persons and living issues, arose the magnificent vital drama of later days where we still detect the universal element which makes English drama intelligible throughout the civilized world, and the purely national note which echoes the distinctively personal characteristics of the nation. If Bale and his fellow experimenters really wrought this mighty good for British

drama (Nicoll doubts whether the religious innovators exerted much influence upon the growth of secular British drama) they deserve a niche in the temple of dramatic fame.

We have said that Bale was a university man; to speak of a 16th century English writer as a university man is practically equivalent to saying that he was a classicist. Bale was not only a classicist but he was a scholarly classicist. Two distinct characteristics of English drama owe, at least in large part, their beginnings to this man who was thoroughly familiar with the technique of the classical Greek and Roman writers. Brooke does not go as far as to claim definitely for Bale the introduction of the five act division or the establishment in English drama of the fundamental distinction observed by the Greeks between tragedy and comedy, but he does declare that Bale was the first to "domesticate in English drama the terms 'comedy' and 'tragedy' "; he claims further that he was one of the first to introduce the Latin practice of dividing plays into acts

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Chapter XXX

CONTINENTAL RENAISSANCE

THE historical investigator of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries continually comes upon the French word *Renaissance*, and the Italian words *Risorgimento*, *Cinquecento*. It is advisable at the beginning of this chapter to define and distinguish the three words.

As a French word *Renaissance* is connected with the verb *renaître*, "to be born again". It is the era which in Europe forms the transition stage between the mediæval and the modern periods; in its beginning it is associated with Petrarch and the other humanists of the fourteenth century. The movement was stimulated by several great events of the fifteenth century, chiefly the invention of printing, about 1440, the fall of Constantinople, 1453, and the discovery of America, 1492; during the sixteenth century the movement spread to France and northern Europe. In France it is associated especially with Louis XII and Francis I; in England we think of it largely in connection with the revival of classical studies under Erasmus, Colet, More, and others; in Germany the word became closely connected with the so-called Reformation.

Some scholars make a distinction between the Italian term *Risorgimento* and the French word *Renaissance*. By *Risorgimento* they understand the Italian revival of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; they apply the word *Renaissance* to the movement during the sixteenth century in the northern and western parts of Europe.

The Italian word *cinquecento* means literally, "five hundred", an abbreviation for fifteen hundred; it refers to the years after 1500, and hence it is a collective term for the sixteenth century. During this era Italian art and literature

flourished luxuriantly; it was during this same period that the Italian renaissance not only reached its highest point but also began its decline. The distinguished names of Rabelais in France (ca. 1495–ca. 1553), Cervantes in Spain (1547–1616), Shakespeare in England (1564-1616), are associated with this century.

The old French word *Renaissance* is gradually giving way to the Anglicised form *Renascence*. The French and the English forms both go back to the Latin participle *renascens* from the verb *renasci*, "to be born again."

Some scholars refuse to assign a definite date to the renaissance. Defining the movement simply as a transition from mediæval mental processes to modern viewpoints they abandon all hope of assigning exact limitations to the beginning or the end of the period.

J. Addington Symonds, whose article in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1875) was so valuable that it is carried over into the new fourteenth edition, attempts to fix definite dates for the renaissance, at least for its culmination. He thinks that the years 1450-1500 mark substantially the termination of the movement. During this momentous half century fall the capture of Constantinople by the Turks (1453) and the discovery of America by Columbus (1492); it was during this period also that the art of printing, dating from 1440, or thereabouts, began to exert a vital influence upon the spread of culture; these three epochal events had results that were permanent and ineradicable. The definite close of the renaissance could, Symonds thinks, be assigned to 1527 when Rome was sacked, or finally, 1530, in which year Symonds sees "the pacification of Italy by Charles V under a Spanish hegemony."

In all historical discussions of the origin of the renaissance the fall of Constantinople enters as an element, major or minor, according to the viewpoint of the historian. The traditional attitude is to look upon the downfall of Constantinople in 1453 as exercising a vital influence upon western civilization by causing an influx of fugitive scholars who by bringing price-

less Greek and Latin manuscripts inspired and fed the scholarship of the west. This viewpoint is now largely superseded; most scholars find in the year 1440, the approximate date of the introduction of printing into Europe, the real origin of the cultural revival which has led to the renaissance. The older view of the important part which Constantinople played in the origin of the humanistic movement is thus set forth by Mr. Maurice Adams in the Introduction to his edition of Thomas More's *Utopia.*[1]—"It remains true, nevertheless, that it was the exiled Greeks, driven into Italy by the growth of the Turkish Power, and the fall of Constantinople, 1453, who first thoroughly aroused the enthusiasm of Italian scholars for the language and literature, the art and philosophy of Greece." Mark Pattison (*Isaac Casaubon*, pages 507, 510, 523) gives the newer historical viewpoint: "It is now well understood that the fall of Constantinople, though an influential incident of the movement, ranks for nothing among the causes of the renaissance."

The downfall of Constantinople may have contributed to the study of Greek in Italy, as Maurice Adams claims, but that the movement really started as a revival of the study of Latin, rather than of Greek, and that the Greek revival came distinctly later is emphatically asserted by Mr. Pattison: "What was revived in Italy of the fifteenth century was the taste of the schools of the Early Empire—of the second and third century."

In passing to the renaissance period we must once more guard against the dangers involved in all attempts at exact classification. It is true that the theater and the drama of the renaissance differed from those of the period of the religious plays, but it is not true that in some mysterious way the beginning of the fifteenth century saw the absolute cessation of an old dramatic régime and the beginning of a new entirely distinct from the old; as a fact we find Mysteries and Moralities continuing into the fifteenth century; we even discover Mysteries and Operas appearing simultaneously in Italy. In Eng-

[1] More's *Utopia,* London, Walter Scott, Ltd.

land at the moment when Shakespeare's *As You Like It* was attesting the new era on the London stage, rustic English audiences were still gaping at the old style pageants.

Our only hope of handling within the scope of a single chapter the vast theme of the renaissance is to keep resolutely in mind the title of our book, *The Story of the Drama.* We are not called upon to enter the debatable field of the changes in church and state, the new philosophic systems, or the discoveries in natural science. Our chief interest is in the revived study of Latin and Greek, the recovery of manuscripts of the ancient classics, the effect of these newly discovered documents in reviving the interest in the classics, and in shaping the playwriting of the period which we call the renascence.

Time has wrought a curious change in the popular attitude toward the study of the ancient classics. The professor of Greek in a modern American university must expect a politely tolerant smile when he is presented to a "Captain of Industry". To the modern "go-getter" Greek is as ancient and of as little commercial value as the pyramids of Egypt. In the fifteenth century, however, Greek was so "modern" a study that it was looked upon with grave suspicion by the conservatives, as one of the tools of the new learning which was undermining the sacred traditions of the fathers. When the eminent statesman and scholar, Sir Thomas More, began the study of Greek at Oxford, his father in genuine alarm took his son out of the university lest he become contaminated by the dangerous novelty.

In the fifteenth century the knowledge of Greek was for a long time limited to a few favored scholars who were envied by their less fortunate friends. Petrarch and Boccaccio, in the fourteenth century, knew no Greek and found no opportunity of studying it, much as they desired to do so; Petrarch bitterly lamented that his only access to the Greek authors was through Latin translations. In the next generation affairs took a turn for the better; there were opportunities enough to study Greek, men enough to teach it, if the pupils and the teachers could be brought together. The young Italians began to find their way

to Athens, the guardian of the living tradition of pure scholarship. Professors of Greek from the East, hearing of the chance of earning large tuition fees in Italy, began to flock thither. Two or three of these men deserve mention because of their fame and the frequent occurrence of their names in the annals of classical study. At the head of the list in order of time is the celebrated Manuel Chrysoloras, a high official at Constantinople, whose duties took him to Italy where he found a new occupation in teaching at Florence. Chrysoloras died in 1415; some 75 years later, about 1489, another Greek, equally illustrious, John Argyropulos, who had held professorships at Florence and at Rome, died, nor should we omit two Italians who distinguished themselves in classical learning: Guarino (died 1460), and Poliziano (died 1494), the famous teacher of a famous pupil, Lorenzo de' Medici.

The lovers of the ancient classics cannot overestimate the services which the Italian Petrarch (1304-1374) rendered their favorite study; he loved learning for its own sake; he exerted all his vast influence in securing long lost ancient manuscripts; his enthusiasm stimulated other scholars to join him in the search for literary treasures. Out of this activity sprang a group of men somewhat new in their day, still an object of ridicule to many, the scholar pure and simple who has no time to make money.

In the generation after Petrarch the polite world came to value these scholars and to call them to official positions of prominence; one of them, Salutato, a great admirer of Petrarch, became Secretary of the Republic of Florence; he found an opportunity of utilizing his scholarship in the composition of state documents elegantly phrased in the Latin which had become the official language of the diplomacy of that time. Another scholar, the well known Poggio Bracciolini was secretary at the Papal court; still another, Niccolo Niccoli, became a book collector and publisher, essentially a business man. But all too soon appeared the pedants, the men who knew books and nothing but books, whose scholarship was arrogant, arid, non-productive. It was the story of the Alexandrine age

of Greek scholarship over again; Francesco Filelfo has the dubious honor of heading the list of these burrowing bookworms.

Even before the days of Petrarch many of the classical Latin authors were known to students, though a Greek book was practically sealed to them. The mediæval mind had been utterly unable to appreciate the real spirit of such classical authors as were available in manuscript form. These scholars had become so steeped in mystical and allegorical interpretation that they sought hidden meanings even in the simplest and most transparent utterances of the clear-headed Romans; Vergil's *Aeneid* became a conjuror's book, filled with mystic references intelligble only to the initiated. There is something comical about the efforts of these university trained hair-splitters to find in [1] Horace's *Journey to Brundisium* something more than a brilliant write-up of an otherwise commonplace journey.

The attitude of the mediæval mind toward the ancient classics before the advent of the new humanism is well illustrated by Louis the Pious, son of Charlemagne of the ninth century. The ascetic spirit had in his day become ascendant; all learning was to be in charge of the clergy; the study of the ancient classics was pronounced dangerous to Christians. Gregory the Great (590-604) had previously given a stern admonition to a bishop whom he had found teaching the grammar of one of the ancient languages; Gregory is represented as saying that "the lips devoted to the service of God ought not to be polluted by such heathen abominations". The classics might be studied, but purely from the utilitarian standpoint, as a method of adding to the efficiency of a worker in the church; they were to be imitated as models of style but with no regard to their content; what these authors said was of no value; the only virtue in their writings lay in the way in which this nothing was said; the moment a man found himself taking æsthetic pleasure in his reading he had cause for alarm. The experience of an abbot of Cluny well illustrates the danger

[1] Horace: Satires, I 5.

which confronted a student of the heathen classics; he tells us that as a young man he had yielded to the charm of Vergil; while asleep one day he beheld an exquisite vase of ancient workmanship; he stretched out his hand to grasp the treasure but found it filled with loathsome serpents; from that moment he never read a line of the classics to which he had been so devoted.

A markedly different attitude toward the ancient authors was seen in Saxony during the same period. Several monasteries, some for men, others for women, became the homes of advanced classical study. In another chapter we speak of the literary work of Hroswitha, the nun of Gandersheim. In the light of the opinion in her day regarding the mingled good and bad in the study of the ancient classics we can readily understand Hroswitha's motive in writing Latin plays in imitation of Terence; to her as to the scholars at Cluny the contents of the plays of this poet were fraught with spiritual danger to the reader; their form, however, was admirable and deserving of careful imitation; to retain the good and neutralize the bad she imitated the form of the heathen poet but in place of dangerous sentiments substituted Christian doctrine.

It was Petrarch who first revealed to these befogged souls the real meaning of the ancient authors. In the works of these writers the great humanists saw man as a rational being with an inalienable right to make use of this earth and enjoy it; in these classics they found no support of the mediæval doctrine that the only real existence is the future life to which humanity is hastening. Calderon's mystical *Life is a Dream* would have been unintelligible to a Greek lyric poet, to an Anacreon, an Alcaeus, a Simonides.

A modern student in one of the famous old mediæval universities becomes so familiar with Latin as a spoken and living language that he uses it unconsciously in taking lecture notes. The announcements on the official bulletin boards are (or at least were when the present writer was a student in the university of Leipzig) in Latin; some of the lectures on classical subjects were delivered in Latin; in one of the courses the stu-

dents and the professor carried on class discussions entirely in that language. It is the lingering mediæval atmosphere in these old European universities which makes them so fascinating to the student from modern bustling America.

The renaissance originated in Italy; to Petrarch and Boccaccio we may trace the beginning of the revival of classical learning in western Europe. For a time the new light shone only in Italy; it was kindled in Paris in 1458; Oxford University caught the gleam still later; when however the Oxford light had reached its full intensity that university outshone all other literary centers. A brilliant company it was in fine old Oxford; two of its best men, Linacre and Grocyn went down to Italy in 1485; there Linacre became a pupil of the famous Poliziano; among Linacre's classmates were the sons of Lorenzo de' Medici. When Linacre and Grocyn got back to Oxford they began to teach Greek to the students who were bored with their study of Aristotle and the schoolmen. Oxford was not the only English university where the study of Aristotle and the schoolmen bored the students; nearly 90 years later, in 1573 to be exact, Francis Bacon, then a young man at Trinity College, Cambridge, made precisely the same complaint about the study of these subjects at his own university. Bacon himself tells us explicitly that while he was at Cambridge University he acquired a positive dislike of the philosophy of Aristotle. His objection to this study was due to what he calls its "unfruitfulness"; he speaks of it as "being a philosophy only strong for disputations and contentions, but barren of the production of works for the benefit of the life of man." Aristotle had been studied in an English translation made from a Latin translation from an Arabic version of the Greek. Each of these translations had added a slight verbal distortion to the meaning of the original; by the time Aristotle had reached those English scholars who were unacquainted with Greek, his words had been so warped and twisted that he himself would have failed to recognize many of the dogmas attributed to him.

How far back can we trace a theater corresponding at all

to our modern stage? Back at least to 1452 when Alberti the Italian architect drew plans for such a theater for Pope Nicholas V. By the close of the fifteenth century the classical revival was in full swing and Plautus, Terence, and Seneca were coming out on the stages in Rome, Florence and Ferrara.

The student of the ancient Roman theaters or those of the renaissance cannot go far without coming upon a reference to the architect Vitruvius. Marcus Vitruvius Pollio was a Roman architect and engineer who lived in the first century B. C.; he is famous as the author of the earliest existing work on architecture; his treatise *De Architectura*, in ten books, had for centuries been lost to the world until by a piece of rare good fortune a manuscript was found in the fifteenth century at St. Gall. Since the recovery of his book it has been exhaustively studied and until recently has been regarded as an authority on the architecture of the Augustan age. The newer attitude toward Vitruvius is to regard him as a theorist rather than as a practical builder.

When the Italian classicists plunged whole-heartedly into the study of the ancient classics, Vitruvius came in at once for careful attention. His work is fully intelligible only to professional scholars. The Italian architects took up this study; from their investigation of Vitruvius they formulated theories of theatrical construction; the more inventive expanded the theories of Vitruvius; from this study resulted new ideas of stage architecture which were destined to affect the future of the world's theaters. Two Italian works which are consulted by all scholars on renaissance theatrical architecture are Serlio's *Architettura* (1551) and Sabbatini's *Pratica di fabricar Scene e Machine ne Teatri* (Ravenna 1638).

From a letter written (in Latin) by a certain Sulpicius Verulanus to Cardinal Raffaele Riario we get a clear picture of a mediæval performance of a tragedy given by the Cardinal at Rome to his friends and thrown open also to the general public. This letter, written toward the close of the fifteenth century, informs us that in the middle of a square in Rome a stage five feet high was erected; the play was first acted before Pope

THREE THEATER SETTINGS FOR THE *ANDRIA* OF TERENCE.
From the Lyons *Terence,* 1493.

Innocent in Hadrian's mole (now the castle of St. Angelo) and repeated in the Cardinal's palace. At another time when the pupils of the famous Pomponius Laetus (1425 - 1498) performed in a comedy the Cardinal introduced for the first time painted scenery, (*picturatae scaenae facies*).

About 25 years later than the performance fostered by Cardinal Riario a certain P. Palliolo describes the stage setting at á theatrical entertainment, where two of the de' Medici family (Giuliano and Lorenzo) were present: "As you look before you, you see the front of the scene divided into five compartments by means of four columns, with bases and capitals covered with gold. In each compartment a door of a size suitable for a private house . . . the lower part of this scene front is adorned with four friezes . . . at the doors

THE TEATRO OLIMPICO.

An Italian Renaissance Theater.

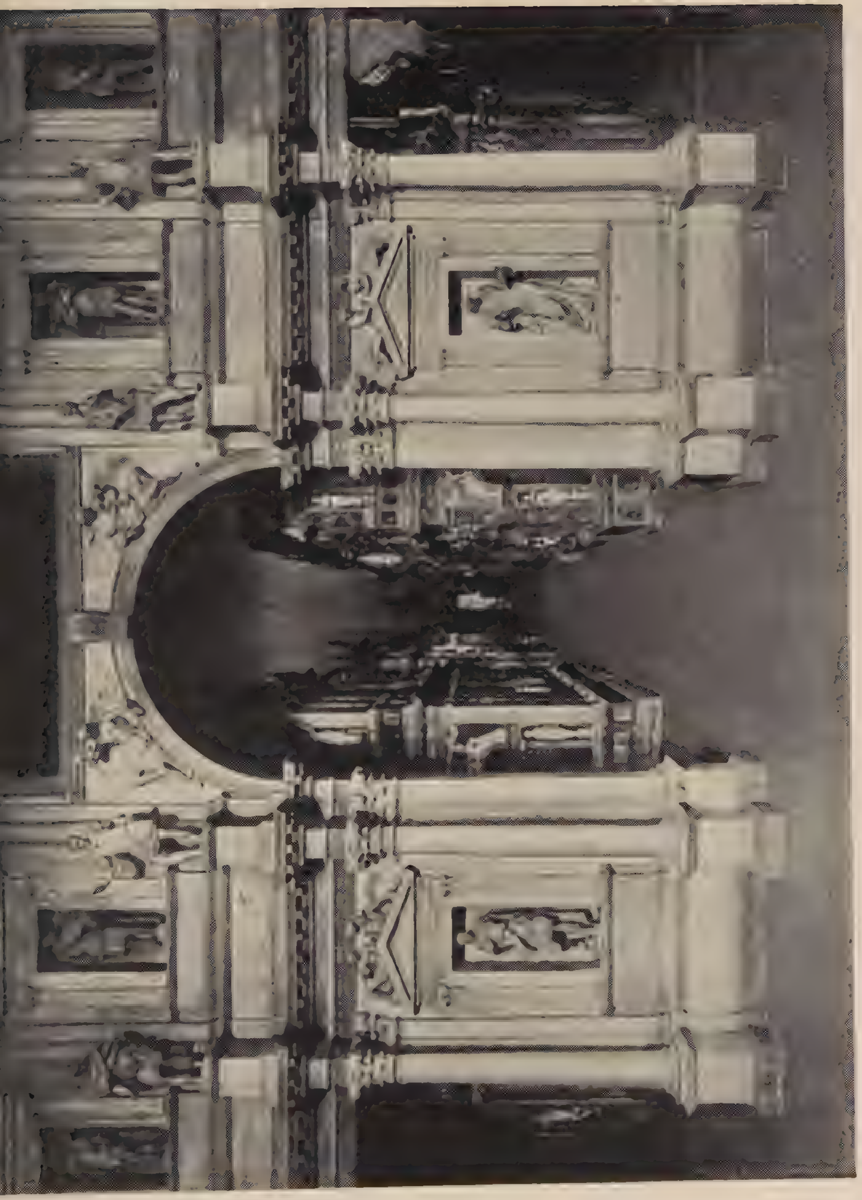
of the scene were hung portières of golden cloth. The proscenium was entirely covered with tapestry and had a highly ornate altar in the middle." The important feature of this description is the five compartments divided by four columns, (in V compassi distinta per mezzo di colonne quadre).

An excellent illustration of the general type of stage above described will be found in three theater settings for the *Andria* of Terence printed in the edition of Terence published in Lyons, France, in 1493. A study of three woodcuts, here presented, will prove of value in giving an actual picture of the renaissance stage at the end of the fifteenth century. It will be observed that the stage setting remains unchanged in the three cuts.

We note four compartments, each of which has a curtain independent of the others; over each is a rounded arch; under each arch is a Latin proper name in the genitive case; before each of the names the Latin word *domus* (home) is to be supplied; the four genitives are *Carini*, *Chreme* (*tis*), *Chrisidis*, *Do*(*mus*) *Symonis*. We see from the second cut that these compartments were sufficiently large to permit at least one person to occupy them; we note at the back of the *Domus Symonis* in the first picture a window. On the back wall behind the compartments are two statues each under a canopy; at the foot of the statues are the names *Liber* and *Phoebus*. In all three illustrations the action is represented as taking place on the stage in front of the four compartments.

In this 1493 edition of Terence the cuts for the other plays show variations in the arrangement of the compartments, but the general principle is the same as in the *Andria*. These pictures are of great value in showing us the stage in a transitional form between the multiple setting of the old French Mystery where all the places to be used in the play (*mansions*) were on the stage at the same time, and the modern stage with a setting permitting withdrawal of the characters into the interior of a house.

Professor Allardyce Nicoll calls the *Teatro Olimpico* at Vicenza, Italy, "one of the great landmarks in the history of



THE CENTRAL ARCHWAY IN THE TEATRO OLIMPICO.

the European theater." This theater, the work of an architect Andrea Palladio, was begun in 1580; Palladio died a few months after beginning his great work and the task of completion was given to Vincenzo Scamozzi. Four years later, 1584, the building was finished. The two photographs which we reproduce from Professor Nicoll's [1] monumental work will give a clear idea of the essential features of this great building. The first thing that strikes the eye in these pictures is the large central arch with its extensive perspective. The stage, following the general design of a Roman theater, is long and narrow; the proscenium (back wall) suggests in its ornateness that of the theater of Orange. If the reader will carefully study the picture he will see four so-called pediments (triangular spaces over recesses) in which are statues, two on each side of the central arch; above are six statues, two reclining on the central arch, two standing on each side of the arch; above and at the side of these standing figures are panels, also containing statues. There was a roof not shown in the picture. This central arch is called by Vitruvius the *porta regia* (royal door); at the ends of the stage are walls projecting at right angles from the back wall to the seats; these side walls also have entrance doors; above the doors in the side walls are boxes, the use of which is uncertain. Through each of the side doors, (*portae minores*), in the back wall are visible perspective alleys or streets so arranged that every spectator whether opposite the main arch or the lateral doors of the back wall had a view of at least one perspective; these perspectives were of streets which were to be thought of as leading into a court which the stage was supposed to represent. Between the stage and the seats was a semicircular orchestra with steps connecting the stage with the orchestra.

[1] The Development of the Theatre, Allardyce Nicoll, Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York, 1927.

Chapter XXXI

THE GOLDEN AGE OF SPAIN: LOPE DE VEGA AND CALDERON

The reign of Philip IV (1621-1665) is known as the Golden Age of Spanish Drama. Around Philip in the early years of his reign was gathered a coterie of famous dramatists; many of these are indeed mere names to the casual reader but to the student of drama they are eloquent; Tirso de Molina (creator of the character *Don Juan*), Lope de Vega, Mira de Mescua, Guavara, Montalban, Calderon; nor may we omit Guillen de Castro whose play *The Cid* was to serve as a model for Corneille's famous play of the same name and lead in France to the historic "Battle of the Cid." Philip was not only a munificent patron of the drama but he was an aspiring dramatist and is believed to have written original *comedias*. At the palace of the Buen Retiro he built a splendid theater, gorgeous with carving and gilding; the stage was supplied with all the machinery that had been devised up to that time. A novel feature of this building was that the back of the stage could be opened, thus giving an outlook upon the royal garden which lay beyond and providing a magnificent scenic background. The munificence of the King was imitated by his courtiers.

In our chapter on the Mysteries we confined ourselves largely to the English branch of this great dramatic movement; our selection of the English Mysteries for detailed discussion was influenced by the fact that to the great majority of the readers of this volume these are the only plays of this species which are available for study. Continental writers were cultivating the Mysteries simultaneously with those in England. The Mystery play originated in the religious service of

the great cathedrals on the continent as well as in those of Great Britain; throughout the vast domain of the Christian church of the Middle Ages the liturgy and ritual were essentially uniform. We have referred to a Dutch mystery, *Elckerlijk*, the reputed original of the English *Everyman.* The very word Mystery is a mere transfer of the French word *mystère* to what had previously been known in England as *Miracles.*

Spanish drama was preceded by Spanish Mysteries, precisely as English Mysteries were forerunners of secular English drama. We can trace Spanish secular drama back to the beginning of the sixteenth century. This drama had to fight its way; it faced an ecclesiastical opposition which, though fostering the Mysteries, regarded the secular play as dangerous in tendency. So determined and so powerful were the opponents of the secular performances that they passed an interdict which was in force until 1573. The situation was somewhat similar to that which the English dramatists had to face in the years immediately preceding the Commonwealth; on one side were the Puritan authorities forbidding performances within the limits of the city of London; on the other the gay court encouraging plays and permitting their production by companies acting under royal license. In Spain, the contest was between ecclesiastical solicitude and popular theatrical taste. To this popular taste, crude and uncultivated though it often was, the Seville goldbeater Lope de Rueda catered and by his judgment and skill fought his way to general acceptance.

By acclaiming Lope de Rueda as their favorite, the people of Spain definitely established the type of drama which was henceforth to prevail. We often wonder why Seneca, the Spaniard, was so generally ignored by his own countrymen. In another chapter we sketch in detail his influence on English drama and we refer to his imitators in France, but we note the remarkable absence of influence on the drama of his own country. The fact is that the renaissance made no real appeal to the people of Spain; to the logical French mind the rules of Greek dramatic composition seemed preëminently valid; the romantic Spanish temperament refused to be fettered by the Unities or

by any other classical restriction. The French writer considered his play a technical triumph when he had confined the action to one spot and had limited the time to 24 hours; the Spanish author rejected any limitation in the choice of subject, time or place. It was this radical difference between the Spanish and the French dramatic viewpoint which involved Corneille in difficulties when he tried to force the Spanish untrammeled *Cid* into the fetters of the French classical rules; this we discuss in detail in the chapter on the *Cid*.

Even in Spain the Lope de Rueda type of unrestricted play had to confront and down some doughty classical antagonists before it could go on its undisputed way. Two classicists appeared in the arena,—one a Professor of Theology in the University of Salamanca, the other a celebrated lyric poet. The Professor was Bermudez, the lyric poet was Argensola. These men endeavored to do for Spain what certain dramatists had tried to do for England and France,—establish Seneca as the dramatic model; they wrote plays conforming to the orthodox Senecan standard,—tragedies with choruses and other characteristic features of their Latin original. Cervantes indeed approved, but the common people called for Lope de Rueda. When Rueda passed from the scene a second and more famous Lope took up the work; under Lope de Vega the popular drama became the undisputed national drama. Possibly some of the classical readers of this volume feel a pang at the defeat of classicism in Spain and in England; these disappointed scholars may solace themselves with their classical French Racine and their Italian Alfieri. Most admirers of Calderon and of Shakespeare will rejoice in their refusal to submit to the limitations of the classical rules; the English romanticist will exult in the breezy freedom of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra;* the English classicist will find supreme satisfaction in Dryden's *All for Love*, where Shakespeare's Pegasus is harnessed and bridled, with bit in mouth.

In another place we speak of the national and the universal note in drama; in this chapter we shall content ourselves with a concise statement of some of the distinguishing features of

Spanish national drama. The general structure of Spanish plays is a developed form of the early ballads and chronicles. In contrast to Greek drama which used exclusively iambic trimeter in the dialogue portions, Spanish drama never adopted a uniformly standard meter for its own dialogue (although as a fact a large part of this dialogue is in trochaic meter). In laying supreme stress on plot rather than on structure, the Spanish writer was unconsciously observing the dictum of Aristotle, who is still attacked by certain critics because he insisted that plot is of supreme importance in dramatic composition. The Spanish dramatist put his strength into the construction of his story; he devoted less care to the development of his characters; Calderon, in particular, is often criticized because of his inability or at least his failure to differentiate his personalities; Goethe called Calderon's characters "bullets all cast in one mold." The reader who studies a single play of Calderon is not acutely conscious of this defect; a perusal of six or eight of his *comedias*, however, may weary by their monotony. At the same time it is but fair to Calderon to point to his leading character in *Life is a Dream;* Segismundo is a carefully drawn individual who passes, in clearly marked steps, from the status of a primitive brutish creature to a disciplined human being fit to govern a kingdom.

Within the period of Spanish drama which this volume covers,—the Golden Age, *siglo de oro*, we need consider only the four great writers who made the period famous,—Lope de Rueda, Lope de Vega, Cervantes and Calderon.

A goldbeater of Seville, Lope de Rueda by name, had the distinguished honor of laying the foundation of the Spanish national drama. That Rueda's right to this title was undisputed we have the testimony of two later men,—Cervantes and Lope de Vega, who though as dramatists they greatly outshone Rueda, ungrudgingly awarded the palm to their humble predecessor. Born about 1510, he died in 1565, one year after the birth of Shakespeare. We first hear of him in 1554 as an actor at Benavente; somewhere between 1558 and 1561 he organized and managed a company of strolling actors;

Rueda himself seems to have been endowed with unusual gifts as an actor. Cervantes, in the Prologue to his own plays, makes a statement about Rueda which, as Ticknor in his *History of Spanish Literature* says, "is of more consequence than all the rest that remains concerning him." The passage is thus translated by Ticknor: "In the time of this celebrated Spaniard, the whole apparatus of a manager was contained in a large sack, and consisted of four white shepherd's jackets, turned up with leather, gilt and stamped; four beards and false sets of hanging locks, and four shepherd's crooks, more or less. The plays were colloquies, like eclogues, between two or three shepherds and a shepherdess, fitted up and extended with two or three interludes, whose personages were sometimes a negress, sometimes a bully, sometimes a fool, and sometimes a Biscayan;—for all these four parts, and many others, Lope himself performed with the greatest excellence and skill that can be imagined." The most significant proof of his successful career is the fact that this humble born artisan, a strolling actor, was at his death deemed worthy of a tomb in the majestic cathedral at Cordova.

Until Lope de Rueda appeared as a writer and actor, no special attention had been paid by playwrights to the popular taste. It is true that the public had witnessed religious plays which from their very nature appeal to the universal man, but with this exception the common people had been left out of account by dramatic writers. Many of Rueda's more elaborate plays are adaptations of Italian models; they keep so closely to their originals that were they the only known works bearing his name, we should not feel inclined to rate him very highly as a dramatist. The real Rueda appears in his prose interludes, (*pasos*); here he displays a minute knowledge of the humble life in which he moved as a strolling actor; these *pasos* are distinguished by racy dialogue and rollicking humor.

Lope Felix de Vega Carpio (1562-1635) was an almost exact contemporary of Shakespeare (1564-1616). Born in Madrid he began his advanced study at the Theatine college

in Madrid, proceeding later to the University of Alcalá de Henares. Like Calderon he served with the colors, but his military career led him into the ill-fated Armada of 1588 where his brother fell in action. After a series of amorous adventures and the loss of his second wife he turned repentantly to the church and became a priest. We must confine our notice of de Vega to his plays but it should be clearly understood that his literary work included epics, pastorals, odes and sonnets; in all these departments of literature he attained high rank; today, however, he appears simply as a great dramatist; his other works are studied only by specialists.

The reader of de Vega's *Arte Nuevo de hacer Comedias en este tiempo* (1609) is impressed by the contemptuous way in which he speaks of playwriting and of the populace that witnessed the plays. We have spoken of the small but influential body of Spanish classicists who were trying to force Senecan rules upon their reluctant nation; de Vega was well acquainted with these learned doctors and he evidently stood in awe of them; he tried to impress upon them that he was well up on Aristotelianism and that he sympathized with the classicists, but he neatly transfers the blame to the yokels to whom he was obliged to cater: "Let us then speak to them in the language of fools, since it is the fools who pay us." It is in this connection that he makes his famous confession: "When I have to write a comedy I lock in the precepts with six keys, I banish Terence and Plautus from my study, that they may not cry out at me." Perhaps the world has never seen so speedy a dramatist. Horace's poet who could dash off two hundred lines an hour while standing on one foot was a laggard beside a *pronto* writer who could boast that in more than a hundred of his plays only twenty-four hours elapsed between the beginning of the writing and the performance on the stage. It is impossible to determine the exact amount of his dramatic work; he himself probably kept no record of his hastily scribbled compositions; when he wrote his *Arte Nuevo* in 1609 he had according to his own statement already composed 483 comedies. The remaining twenty-six years of his life doubtless

saw enormous accretions; we have some knowledge today of about 470 of his *comedias* and about 50 *autos*.

If we study carefully the Spanish dramas which had been produced between the appearance of Lope de Rueda, about 1544, and the dramatic work of de Vega we are impressed by the smallness of the number and by the divergency in form. The Spanish populace had demanded absolute freedom in dramatic expression and each playwright had followed his own inclination with no recognition of any critical authority, and with an absolute disregard of the method and style of his fellow dramatists. Rueda had been dead more than twenty years and no other dramatist had arisen to take his place in popular esteem; the road was clear for the second Lope; which road would he take,—the classical or the national.

When, therefore, Lope de Vega began his work he found drama in a chaotic condition; the number of acts varied between three and four; the versification was irregular; the manners and the characters of the plays were imperfectly drawn. De Vega created real human types; he adjusted his language to the particular social order which he was handling; into the imperfect versification left him by his predecessors he introduced regularity. It was an ample appreciation of his own contribution to drama which led him to remark that those who came after him had simply to follow in his footsteps. Despite his fault of overhasty composition, we must credit him with inventive power, dramatic cleverness, and the gift of varied expression.

We may dismiss with a brief notice Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547-1616) because, famous as he was as the author of the immortal *Don Quixote,* his plays were probably not really successful, or at least they were less successful than we might infer from what he says about them. He knew both the Lopes (Rueda and de Vega), but he disliked de Vega quite as heartily as he admired Rueda. He saw Rueda on the stage somewhere (Valladolid or possibly Madrid) and he speaks enthusiastically of him. When he refers to de Vega his attitude is very different; in his *Don Quixote* he speaks sarcas-

tically of him; de Vega's retort does not lack vigor: "No poet is as bad as Cervantes, nor so foolish as to praise *Don Quixote.*" Cervantes' genius did not lie in the direction of drama; though during the years 1582-1587 he wrote a number of plays, they are practically unknown today to any except specialists.

Don Pedro Calderon de la Barca,—Calderon, we call him for short, was born in 1600, three years before the death of the English queen Elizabeth. He came of distinguished stock; his father was secretary of the royal Spanish treasury; his mother was descended from an aristocratic French family which for several generations had been resident in Spain. He began his higher education at the Jesuit college in Madrid; from that city he passed to the famous university at Salamanca where he spent four years. At nineteen he received his Bachelor's degree. One critic speaks of him as "only nineteen" when he took his degree, and comments on the youthfulness of matriculants at European universities in the seventeenth century. The student of education would find it a fascinating pastime to follow this clue regarding the age at which students entered the great universities in those days. Francis Bacon would furnish an excellent starting point for the English universities; we read that he was but 12 when he entered Trinity College, Cambridge; when he sententiously informed the world that the Aristotelian educational system was all out of joint and that he had appointed himself a committee of one to set things right, he had reached the mature age of 16. When at the age of 19 Calderon had received his diploma he did what young graduates are still doing, he looked for work, or rather in modern parlance, he "was willing to accept a position." For a time he thought of entering the law, but the urge to go into literature (inclinación cómica) was strong. After six years of wavering during which he did considerable writing he entered the royal army in 1625 and fought for three years in Flanders and in other places. Apparently like the English dramatist Milne, he kept up his dramatic work even during the intervals between his actual combats on the field. We know that in 1630, two years after his withdrawal

from the army, his staunch admirer Lope de Vega refers to him in *The Laurel of Apollo* and two years later still in 1632, a Spanish writer (Montalban) mentions him as the composer of numerous popular plays. Calderon's military career did not end with the close of his first campaign in 1628. Twelve years later, an uprising in Catalonia necessitated a royal expedition; Calderon's military order was subject to the call and he hastened to respond; the king was so unwilling to release him from the court that as a pretext he ordered him to write a play before he joined the colors; to the king's amazement the impetuous dramatist rushed through a new play and then hurried to the front. There is official evidence that he distinguished himself as a soldier; in November 1642 he was retired from active service because of his physical impairment and he returned to Madrid.

The student of Spanish literature is constantly reminded of the reverence with which distinguished Spanish writers regarded the religious life. Lope de Vega took orders in 1609; Tirso de Molina entered a cloister; Mira de Mescua became an archdeacon; Montalban was a Doctor of Divinity. Calderon's mother had earnestly wished that her son should become a priest; in 1650 that son, now a man of 50, yielded to his mother's desire. His advancement was rapid; within three years the king appointed him as one of the clergy officiating in the famous Chapel of the Kings at Toledo; ten years later, 1663, the monarch was so desirous of having his favorite dramatist near him that he named him one of his honorary chaplains. In this same year he was appointed a member of the Congregation of St. Peter and in 1666 he became head of the Congregation; it was the priests of this order of St. Peter who in 1681 carried him to his grave in the Church of San Salvador.

The death of Philip IV, his patron, in 1665, was a great blow to Calderon. That death was but a forerunner of the passing of many of the artists and playwrights who had made Philip's reign so illustrious from the artistic standpoint; Velasquez, Herrera, Murillo, famous painters all, soon followed

their royal patron; Calderon's last dramatic rival, Moreto, died in 1669.

Thus we find our great genius advanced in years, honored and admired by his countrymen yet essentially lonely amid all his fame. He had never known domestic life; both his brothers were dead; his sister had withdrawn from the world; he was at least free from pecuniary anxieties and he enjoyed the acquaintance of many highly placed gentlemen of the court.

One of the most amusing anecdotes of his later life is that of the Frenchman who called on him and recorded later in language not too complimentary his impressions of the aged literary lion. Maccoll's translation of the Frenchman's remarks is delightful. The visitor had been taken to the theater to see one of Calderon's plays but he pronounced it "naught" despite the fame of its author; he engaged in conversation with Calderon but as a result of the talk he concluded that "his head piece was furnished poorly enough." They "disputed a good while on the rules of the drama, which in this land are not recognized, and about which the Spaniards make themselves merry." The last sentence invites comment; it indicates in a few words the vital difference between the order-loving rule-bound French classical dramatist and the care-free Spanish playwright who, like Lope de Vega, knew all the rules but "locked them up" when he took his pen in hand.

Calderon kept up his literary work to the very last; even when his end was but a question of hours and he had received the last sacrament he worked on an *auto* for his native city. When he died in May 1681, his burial was quiet and free from ostentation; a few days later, however, a second service was held, splendid to a degree which was intended to surpass that of his great predecessor Lope de Vega.

Calderon was one of those rare geniuses who "cannot help writing plays". Historians sniff at the recorded statement that at the age of thirteen he had written a drama; there is nothing extraordinary about that,—Lope de Vega traces back his own first dramatic attempt to his eleventh or twelfth year. A merciful oblivion has spared us the necessity of reading the first

plays of Calderon or de Vega. Perhaps the unwilling listeners or readers on whom these effusions were inflicted found refuge in the ambiguous comment: "What a play!" Possibly Calderon began his serious playwriting during his undergraduate days; countless students are still doing it. He satisfies our curiosity to the extent that he tells us that he was twenty years old when as a candidate for a prize he forwarded his first poetic production to the judges of a literary contest. The occasion of the competition was distinctly religious, the festival of St. Isidro. His contribution was a sonnet,—poetic rather than dramatic. We can imagine him awaiting eagerly the announcement of the award. He failed to find his name among the winners; though the prize went elsewhere he received what must have been almost as precious, an appreciative letter from the great Lope de Vega. Two years later the canonization of St. Isidro was celebrated and again Calderon sent in a competitive poem,—a *canción*. Better results this time,—a third prize; dearer even than the prize was another complimentary letter from Lope de Vega, praising the "tender youth who was already gathering the laurels that usually adorn only the aged brow."

In 1680 Calderon, long past the scriptural allotment of three score years and ten was famous; so famous, indeed, that unscrupulous printers, utilizing to the full the absence of a protecting copyright law, were bringing out, under his name, plays to which he had never contributed a line; equally harmful to his reputation was the atrociously bad printing of his genuine plays,—typographical errors which made many of his lines unintelligible, omissions which changed materially the meaning of the complete sentences. Sixteen years earlier (1664) in a dedication which he furnished to the third edition of his collected plays, he had complained of the injury which these nefarious practices were causing to his reputation. He therefore acceded in 1680 to the request of the Duke de Veraguas to draw up a list of his genuine dramatic works. In this list he mentions one hundred and eleven plays and seventy *autos*. We possess today under the name of Calderon one hundred and twenty *comedias*, seventy-three *autos*, and four-

teen *sainetes.* (We shall explain the *sainete* in the chapter on the Spanish Theater.)

Critics have made minute classifications of Calderon's plays; they speak of his mythological dramas, his philosophical plays, his historical dramas, his dramas of real life, his *autos sacramentales.*

We need not discuss this classification because in his own day dramas were divided into two classes only,—secular (*comedias*) and religious (*autos sacramentales*). The Spanish word for secular play was *comedia;* it differs in meaning from our word *comedy* in that the ending of a Spanish *comedia* might be either serious or comic.

Autos or *autos sacramentales* were religious plays corresponding in a general way to the Mysteries of England and France. Spanish *autos* are connected historically with the church festival of Corpus Christi of which we speak in the chapter on Miracles. We can trace as far back as the early part of the sixteenth century Spanish religious plays designed to instruct the populace in the doctrine of the Sacred Eucharist; their real purpose was, as Ticknor puts it, "to set forth and glorify the doctrine of the Real Presence in the Eucharist." In Calderon's time the *auto sacramental* had become a recognized form, requiring a thoughtful and dignified treatment of the sacred theme. Calderon was especially noted for his skill in these plays.

As we pass from one country to another in our *Story of the Drama* we frequently discover dramatic features peculiar to one particular country. In Greek tragedy we found the chorus with its definite function; in Greek comedy we had the *parabasis,* a device employed by the dramatists of no other nation; in French classical drama we find the *raisonneur* and the *confidant,* used as a substitute for the obsolete Greek chorus. In classical Spanish drama we come upon the *gracioso,* a rôle revived by Lope de Vega, if not invented by him; he was intended to be a comic character; his function was to raise a laugh among the *mosqueteros.* Regardless of the austere Greek rule which kept comedy and tragedy strictly apart the

Spanish dramatist was more in sympathy with the Elizabethans who never scrupled to introduce jokes into the most serious dramatic situations. (How that grave-digger episode in *Hamlet* still rankles in the critical soul of the French classicists!)

The Spanish *gracioso* had a multiple rôle and he served a number of conveniences; he took the place of the Greek chorus by commenting, flippantly enough, on the actions of his superiors; he served the purpose of *exposition;* he often came upon the stage, fresh from some stirring event and graphically described what he saw, thus fulfilling exactly the function of the Greek messenger. In both dramas this spirited narration of an exciting event served the dramatic purpose of bringing to the attention of the audience some scene which the limitations of time or the scarcity of scenic equipment made it inadvisable or impossible to present on the stage. Further, the *Gracioso* aroused *expectation* because he was usually a coward and deserted his master at a critical point in a stirring scene, leaving the audience eager to learn what happened after his departure; finally, he was skilfully employed to bring out the virtues of his hero in comparison with the lack of those qualities in the *gracioso* himself.

Chapter XXXII

THE SPANISH THEATER

We have defined the Golden Age of Spanish drama as the period of the reign of Philip IV (1621-1665), the days of Lope de Vega and Calderon, of the bloom of drama under royal patronage, of the extraordinary though hectic and short lived activity in dramatic production and the unprecedented theater attendance of the seventeenth century.

When Lope de Vega began his theatrical career, dramatic conditions at the capital were in a very primitive condition; the only places available for the presentation of his plays were two unroofed courtyards; from the windows of the surrounding houses the occupants looked down upon the performance; around his rude platform stage were grouped the humble citizens who paid only for standing room. Resident companies were as yet unknown; the inhabitants of the city of Madrid were as dependent for their theatrical entertainment upon the strolling troupes who from time to time included this city in their itinerary, as were the small interior towns of our own country which had to content themselves with occasional road companies in the days before the "moving picture palace" supplanted the village "opera house". When Lope died in 1635 a remarkable change had taken place in the theatrical situation. The king had shown his love of drama by the construction in his palaces of several theaters for private performances; in place of the strolling troupes which came and quickly disappeared, as many as a thousand actors had taken up their permanent residence in the capital; in the course of the next forty-five or fifty years there swept through Spain a passion for the drama comparable to the American photoplay furore of our own generation. When Calderon died in 1681 the dramatic

wave had swept over the entire country; it would have been as difficult to find a Spanish hamlet without its theater as it would be today to discover an American village without its silent or spoken photoplay house. Spain had gone theater mad. Amateur theatrical writers blossomed everywhere; tailors, sheepclippers, shopkeepers, felt the inspiration precisely as the French pastry shopkeeper Ragueneau in Cyrano de Bergerac's time felt the poetic afflatus. Not only did the populace turn to playwriting but it constituted itself a body of dramatic critics. We read of a shoemaker who near the end of Calderon's career posed as the *arbiter elegantiarum* of the critical mosqueteros. Woe betide the foolish playwright who tried to purchase the favorable judgment of these hair-trigger critics. Ticknor tells of an attempt to bribe an influential leader of the groundlings; he refused to accept the money until he had heard the play; he was an honest man however bad he may have been as a critic; he roundly hissed the play. Playwriters who refused to buy applause did not scruple to beg for it; we have ample evidence of the humble appeals made by the dramatists to the "most honorable mosqueteros" to deign to favor the performance with their approval, with the "victor shout". Amusing as these incidents appear to us they are of value in that they give indubitable proof of the oft repeated assertion of critics that the drama of the Golden Age in Spain was national to a degree almost unprecedented in dramatic annals.

With mechanics writing plays, shoemakers pronouncing judgment, and the whole nation crowding the theaters, we might expect an enormous increase in the number of plays. Estimates of the number written by the year 1700 run as high as thirty thousand, a huge aggregation of dramatic work of the most miscellaneous sort,—heroic plays, comedies of cloak and sword, farces, *autos*, saints' plays.

The dramatic furore passed rapidly; it waned before the end of the century in which it had arisen. The death of Philip in 1665 deprived the stage of a staunch patron; the loose lives of the swarms of vagabond actors furnished ammunition to the authorities who had always frowned upon the secular drama

and sought to restrain its excesses. One writer of the period sums up in sententious Latin his opinion of the whole tribe of actors: *Pondus iners rei publicæ, atque inutile* ("An idle and useless burden on the community"). The loss of royal patronage, the restrictions imposed by law, the shift in public taste, brought about so rapid and so disastrous a change in the fortunes of the Spanish stage and native actors that whereas in 1650 there were no less than forty theatrical companies in Madrid, Charles II (1665-1700), the successor of Philip IV, found it difficult to secure the services of three companies to furnish amusement at the festivities of his wedding.

The reader of the chapter on the Elizabethan stage is constantly reminded of the similarity between the auditorium of Calderon's day and that of Shakespeare's period. In both we have a stage projecting into the audience; both theaters were roofless; in both we note the absence of a curtain separating the stage from the auditorium; in both we see an open space unprovided with seats; in both a gallery from which the aristocratic classes watched the performance. Further similarities will suggest themselves to the reader who studies the details of both houses. Similar as they were in general structure the two theaters had an independent origin; the Elizabethan theater was simply an architectural perpetuation of the old inn-yards in which the strolling theatrical troupes had originally performed; the Spanish theater of Calderon's day was merely a developed form of the courtyard in which Lope de Rueda's strollers had gone through their crude farces; from the windows of the neighboring houses the curious spectators had looked upon the show in the courtyard precisely as boys now perch in convenient trees to watch a ball game. The theater of Calderon's day reproduced, in the *desvanes* and *aposentos*, the balconies and the rooms from which the curious neighbors had originally looked upon Lope de Rueda's company; the balconies of the Elizabethan theaters simply copied the galleries of the inns from which the guests had curiously watched the doings of the strolling actors in the courtyard.

As we stand on the low stage of an unroofed Spanish

theater we see at our feet a few benches (*bancos*), reserved for well-to-do patrons who are not the fortunate possessors of a private box in the galleries, yet are desirous of witnessing a single performance and are able to pay well for the privilege. These *bancos* correspond roughly to the high-priced orchestra seats in a modern theater; back of these benches we see an open space affording standing room only and crowded with the mosqueteros. Back of the mosqueteros is an enclosure for the women of the humbler classes, the "stewpan" (*cazuela*), as it was ironically called by the Spaniards. The impecunious young gallant of those days who took his lady to the theater had the unpleasant experience of parting with her when they entered the door; even in our own country there are still a few motion picture houses where ladies and gentlemen are seated separately; in this case, however, it is the gentlemen who are shown to the stewpan, the gallery, while their lady friends are ushered to a seat in the darkness of the main floor. We are told that from their point of vantage in the *cazuela* and safely protected by the barriers of their stewpan, the ladies were not averse to calling attention to their presence.

If a man was unwilling to undergo the wearisome experience of standing through a performance and he could afford a low-priced seat, provision was made for his needs; benches called *gradas*, rising like the bleachers on a modern ball field, were open at a special price to men. The authorities are a little vague regarding the location of these *gradas;* Ticknor places them "behind the mosqueteros"; Maccoll describes them as "sloping down to the yard or *patio* from the *aposentos*" (the lower tier of boxes).

Extending around three sides of the courtyard or auditorium were balconies called *desvanes* and rooms known as *aposentos*, providing the most advantageous locations from which to view the performance. These choice seats were eagerly taken by the wealthy and aristocratic citizens; so highly were they valued that, once acquired, a seat was retained from year to year in the same family and handed down by the proprietor to his descendants as an heirloom. From these balconies

the Spanish ladies of quality with their male companions studied with an amused interest that sometimes diverted their attention from the performance on the stage, the conduct of the humble classes on the main floor.

Shakespeare speaks contemptuously of the groundlings who "for the most part were capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise." To this day the word has a contemptuous connotation. The Spanish equivalent was equally graphic but by no means so contemptuous; the mosqueteros (musketeers or infantrymen) got their name in part from their erect standing position, Ticknor thinks, but certainly also from the boisterous rudeness which so reminded the audience of the rough common soldiers who, as a fact, frequently formed a fair proportion of the "standees". Lope de Vega sneered at these mosqueteros but he admits that it was to these "fools" that he looked for a living; Shakespeare jibed at the "groundlings", but they were his financial mainstay; even more, they were often juster critics than the elegants who crowded his stage and impeded the movement of the actors. Dekker, in his *Gull's Horn Book,* in a well known passage describes the noisy conduct of these dandies during a theatrical performance. Shakespeare's groundlings appreciated him far better than the perfumed fops who ostentatiously left the stage at a tense moment in the performance.

In the old Bowery Theater in New York it was the mosqueteros of the upper galleries that usually decided the fate of a play in that theater. It was a common belief in those days that actors courted and dreaded the verdict of the newsboys in the top gallery more than they did that of the cultivated spectators in the high-priced seats. Joseph Jefferson insisted that his leading lady should address herself as respectfully to the second balcony as to the front seats of the orchestra; it is on record that one of the greatest of the male actors of the older days sent to an expectant friend an enthusiastic telegram to the effect that he knew he had made a hit on the old Bowery stage because the newsboys had yelled their approval.

Those of our readers who have familiarized themselves

with the other chapters of this book will find, in the conduct of Spanish audiences of the Golden Age, a striking evidence of the existence of human traits which are shared by all civilized nations. The assemblies which we have thus far discussed were noisy and tumultuous, so far as the groundlings at least were concerned; to this day we find audiences in certain rustic moving picture shows hissing the villain, applauding the heroine, and expressing their feelings by whistling and cat calls. Human nature has not changed much since the days when the Greeks hurled vegetables at unlucky actors; today eggs are the approved missile in a theater, but cushions and pop bottles are favored on the ball field. The missiles have been modernized, but the propelling impulse remains unchanged. Nothing in the conduct of a Spanish audience will surprise the well read student of drama; when a Spanish crowd was pleased it cried "victor"; when a modern Italian audience is delighted it cries "bravo"; when a French audence is satisfied it calls "encore". A friend of the writer once employed a servant who was an inveterate theater-goer; she came home one night in a highly excited state; she said that the audience had been so wild with delight that it cried, "rabbo! rabbo!". It had "entréed" the actors five times. The unruly Greeks threw figs, olives, cabbages; the angry Spaniards projected cucumbers *(pepinos)*; a New York audience as recently as within a decade, threw eggs. The human target in the New York episode was a fellow of "infinite jest, of most excellent fancy"; when a well directed egg had reached its goal the actor stepped forward and politely inquired, 'Gentlemen, was this personal or was it intended for the author?"

We constantly come upon evidence that all the classes of a Spanish audience of that day were inclined to be unruly, unfair, and surly. Even the actors shared the prevalent mood; the author of a play was quite as likely as not to be treated with contempt if, at a rehearsal, he made any suggestion about the acting. Later parallels to this contempt of the actor for the author of the play might easily be found; Browning was not personally present when the first reading of his *Blot in the*

'Scutcheon was greeted with a roar of contemptuous laughter by the assembled actors, but Macready with malicious promptness reported it to the sensitive poet. Even the ladies in the stewpan, chafing under their enforced segregation, occasionally joined in the discordant uproar of disapproval. An old Spanish writer offers consolation to an artist who had been subjected to this discourtesy: "What if a stupid young thing in the *cazuela* has shown her displeasure? What need you care about a sneer from the stewpan when the mosqueteros are roaring their approval?" The ladies in the boxes were closely masked that they might not betray their blushes at the broad innuendoes and the broader actions of the performers on the stage.

To secure good places the Spanish audience went early, precisely as the Greeks left home at sunrise and the Japanese ladies make their elaborate toilette the night before and sit up all night to avoid a disarrangement of their coiffure. All this shows a marked interest in the theater, but it is doubtful whether the records of antiquity and the Orient can duplicate the old days when Bostonians hired messenger boys who for twenty-four hours by relays kept their places in the line awaiting the opening of the box office of the symphony concerts in the old Music Hall.

When a Spanish audience pushed its way into a theater long in advance of the performance it amused itself very much as did the French audiences in the days of Molière. Rostand describes it all very vividly and very accurately in his *Cyrano de Bergerac;* a chief difference is that the earlier arrivals in *Cyrano de Bergerac* cheered the attendant who lighted the first candle; the early Spanish theater needed no artificial illumination because the performance took place in the broad daylight (another similarity to the Elizabethan theater). The fruit peddlers, the confectionery girls, the sellers of drinks of those days find their noisy counterparts in the peanut and pop hawkers on the modern baseball field.

Of course there were late comers,—deliberate or accidental, in those days as in these; they were as intolerable a nuisance then as now. What admirer of Charlie Chaplin can

ever forget that early triumph in which he pilloried for all time the late arrival who solemnly treads on the feet of a dozen expostulating seat holders, only to find that he has forced his way to the wrong seat and must retrace his devastating steps?

All too often a Spanish grandee sent word in advance that he would arrive at a late hour; the manager took the hint and delayed the opening of the performance; he faced an awkward dilemma; it was to his interest to keep the favor of his influential patron, but before his eyes were the angry mosqueteros stunning his ears with their hoots and their loud threats of vengeance if the show was longer delayed.

A typical performance consisted of the following:

1. Song with musical accompaniment
2. Prologue (loa)
3. Act I
4. Entremes
5. Act II
6. Entremes
7. Act III
8. Sainete
9. National dance.

An explanation of the various numbers on this program may be of assistance to the reader. The opening song, serving as a prelude, was intended to be "catchy",—a favorite old ballad, a popular song hit of the day, with guitar accompaniment. We can almost hear the stentorian mosqueteros stamping time and joining in the refrain, as popular audiences still have a way of doing in the less conventional houses. The *loa*, a word which means literally "a compliment" served as a prologue; it was as peculiar a characteristic of a Spanish play as was the Greek *parabasis* of a comedy in the days of Aristophanes. The general purpose of the *loa* was to put the audience into a mood friendly to the actors and the author of the play; the theme was suited to each particular occasion; it somewhat resembled, in motive at least, the curtain-call speeches of popular stars today; the old theater-goer knows them by heart: "My special

pleasure in acting in this famous city"; "This remarkably intelligent audience" *et cetera.* The reciter of the *loa,* sometimes a leading actor, sometimes the manager, knew all the devices of the trade: "The beautiful ladies who grace this performance" was good for every town on the circuit; "Here's to the brave boys who have just routed the enemy in the great battle of X" was a sure-fire *loa* in war times. The manner of delivery varied somewhat; sometimes it was spoken, sometimes sung, sometimes the song had a dance accompaniment, it was sometimes in the form of a dramatic skit in which three or four of the actors participated.

Following the *loa* came Act I of the regular play. The Spanish word for act is *jornada* which means literally "a day's journey"; it derives its name from the dramatic precept that the time covered by each act of a Spanish play should not exceed one day; the number of acts should not exceed three; if the action of the whole play covered a considerable period of time, each of the three acts or *jornadas* should if possible be limited to the events of a single day, and the lapse of time should be thought of as occurring between the acts.

Following the first act (*jornada*) came an *entremes.* The *entremes* was a "variety sketch" intended to relieve the mental strain to which the audience had been subjected during the first act of the play; it varied in its nature at different periods, but throughout its career it was, as a general rule, like the Greek *parabasis,* entirely unconnected with the plot of the play itself. At first the *entremes* was a rude farce; later it became a skit on the doings of the lower classes; still later it reached a higher poetic plane and included song and dance.

Following Act II came another *entremes.* Act III was then brought on and the performance concluded with a *sainete* (or *saynete*), a diversion practically or quite identical with the *entremes.* Benavente is credited with the introduction of the word *sainete,—bonne bouche* is Ticknor's paraphrase of the word. The performance concluded with a national dance executed on the stage amid the wild delight of the patriotic audience who went home in thoroughly good humor.

The sturdy frequenter of English or German tragedy,—of Shakespeare's *Othello* or Schiller's *Maria Stuart* must have his doubts about the mental fiber of the Golden Age Spaniards whose minds needed relaxation (or irrigation) at such frequent intervals. The three acts of serious performance were almost submerged in the flood of songs, farces, twanging guitars and rhythmical stepping.

The stage of the two chief open air theaters of Madrid was a rough scaffolding, rising but a few feet from the ground of the courtyard. Spanish managers had to contend with precisely the same annoyance as that which troubled those of Elizabethan times and of Voltaire's day,—the presence of gallants on the stage. Many a year was to pass before the appearance of a Garrick brave enough to rid the stage of these yawning supercilious loungers.

Although music formed part of a Spanish performance we do not hear of a place specially reserved for the orchestra as in the Japanese theaters; the Spanish musicians, like the Senecan chorus, came upon the stage whenever needed and retired when their momentary contribution to the program was completed.

We must make a broad distinction between the stage settings used in the two popular theaters in Madrid during our period (Theater de la Cruz and Theater del Príncipe), and those in the Royal Theater. The stage of the two public theaters was without a roof and had a very meager scenic equipment. At the back of the stage a rough temporary structure of some kind was erected, appropriate to the particular play which was to be presented; it might for instance represent a castle or the wall of a town; in Calderon's *Life is a Dream* it was a crude representation of a craggy mountain side down which Rosaura dashed on her fiery steed. There was no front curtain separating the auditorium from the stage, but at the back and on the sides of the stage tapestries were hung for the purpose of concealing the entrance and exit doors. These tapestries took the place of scenery; now and then a bit of canvas on which was painted the rude outline of some object such as a house or a

tree, might serve to indicate a locality much as did the Greek *periaktos,* but more frequently the author indicated the location by a reference in the lines of the play as Shakespeare was obliged to do on account of the absence of scenery on his own stage. Both the Elizabethan and the Spanish dramatists left much to the imagination of the audience.

Certain crude mechanical devices were employed; some of them remind us of Greek stage machinery; both the Greeks and the Spaniards employed trapdoors; the Spanish machinery for raising and lowering mythological characters is suggestive of the Greek *deus ex machina.* That sprightly Frenchwoman Madame d'Aulnoy, fresh from the elaborate stages of the French theaters ridiculed the clumsy contrivances of the popular Spanish stage, though she spoke appreciatively of the magnificent private theater of the king.

We have already referred to the elaborate theater of King Philip at his palace of the Buen Retiro. The stage of this theater was furnished with every device known to the theatrical art of that day. Knowing the superiority of Italian stage inventiveness to that of his own countrymen Philip sent to Italy for the best stage mechanicians and he placed his huge financial resources at their service. By throwing open the back of the stage the artists were able to utilize the shrubbery and the lake of the royal gardens as part of the stage scene. It is a curious fact that in the "play within a play" in *The Sea Gull* the Russian dramatist Tchekhoff employed precisely this device. We can readily imagine the scenic possibilities of this plan; there would be a great difference between Cleopatra's barge on the barren Shakespearean stage and in Philip's theater where a large lake and a genuine boat would vastly enhance the scene. We know that Philip produced Ulysses on a golden barge floating on the water of a real lake, and that he was able also to represent Ulysses' temptresses, the Sirens, as weaving their spell in a most realistic way. It is not surprising that Madame d'Aulnoy, after witnessing these splendid scenic effects at the Buen Retiro laughed so sarcastically at the crudities of the two popular Spanish theaters.

When we read of the meticulous care bestowed by David Belasco on his realistic plays, of the minutely historical accuracy of the costumes in modern Russian plays, we are inclined to smile at the indifference which the Spaniards of Calderon's day manifested regarding the costume of their stage characters. The two prime essentials of a play of that period were that it should be interesting and that it should be one hundred per cent Spanish; the plot must be well constructed; there must be a succession of incidents gradually increasing in excitement as the story moved steadily toward a definite goal. If the dramatist met this test and if in addition he made over all his historic characters of whatever nation into genuine seventeenth century Castilian Spaniards he need feel no anxiety over the wardrobe of his stage heroes and heroines; Ticknor puts it accurately as well as graphically in words that are eminently quotable: "Coriolanus was dressed like Don John of Austria; Aristotle came on the stage with a curled periwig and buckles in his shoes, like a Spanish Abbé". But how should his Satanic Majesty attire himself for the stage? Madame d'Aulnoy, in her *Relation du Voyage d'Espagne* (1693) tells exactly what a Castilian stage devil of the later seventeenth century looked like. We quote her words in Ticknor's translation: "He was dressed like any other Castilian gentleman, except that his stockings were flame-colored and he wore horns." This assertion of the essential resemblance of the devil to "any other Castilian gentleman" is, as the English would say, "a nasty one."

The stress laid upon dancing as part of a Spanish dramatic performance is curiously like the rôle which dancing played in an ancient Greek drama except that to the Greeks the dramatic dance was a series of stately rhythmical movements with a profound religious significance forming part of the worship of Dionysus. Dancing formed part of the performance of the early religious plays of Spain precisely as it was employed in the primitive religious ceremonies of so many other nations, but in Spanish secular drama the religious connotation had so completely disappeared and stage dances had finally assumed

so abandoned a form that the government made every effort to abolish them; once more as in so many previous clashes with the Spanish populace in dramatic matters the government was worsted; the authorities had to withdraw, satisfied with having curbed or modified several extreme forms of the dance and with having abolished one of the most objectionable. The extent to which most of these dances had departed from the original religious spirit is graphically depicted by a writer, Guavara, who declares that they were all the invention of the devil. Cervantes admits that the worst offender of all, the one dance which the government actually succeeded in banning, could not possibly have originated in any other source. Lope de Vega, however, has a good word to say for these stage dances which were accompanied by singing; they were, he thinks, better, at least, than the *entremeses* which were concerned chiefly with the actions of thieves and other desperate characters. In spite of what the government might attempt, or Cervantes say, the crowds demanded their dances; from the beginning of history, even back of history into the misty traditional period, the Spanish peasant has loved the dance; he still loves it. Ticknor writing in the first half of the nineteenth century declared that "Dancing has been to Spain what music has been to Italy, a passion with the whole population."

Inasmuch as the popular Spanish theater, like that of the Greeks, the Romans, and the Elizabethans was unroofed, the performances took place in the daytime and there was no provision for artificial lighting. The palace performances, given in roofed auditoriums, could be held at any hour at the convenience of the monarch and the nobility, and artificial lighting could be readily employed. The popular open air performances took place daily, beginning at 2 p. m. in winter and 3 p. m. in summer.

Spanish actors were obliged, like the members of a Chinese or Japanese company, to have in memory and instantly available a large repertoire, that they might satisfy the insistent demands of the Spanish for variety and novelty.

Their salaries were very low, but they were paid daily. As

a well informed old Spanish writer puts it, "The actor is paid his wages every night; the manager must pay even if he hasn't a nickel in his pocket."

When we inquire into the social position of actors in Calderon's day we encounter once more the depressing story of ostracism and a low morale which was partly the cause, partly the result of the ostracism. For centuries, in our *Story of the Drama*, from the days of the Romans to the time of the English miracles, we are obliged to chonicle the low estate of the actor and especially of the actress. We find no improvement in our study of the actor of the Golden Age in Spain. As a class they were held in very low esteem. Ticknor does not hesitate to stigmatize them as disorderly vagabonds and to attribute to their lawlessness the restrictive legislation which hampered dramatic development. But, precisely as today an audience of the humbler classes almost invariably sides with the rogue who is hunted by a detective, and exults when he escapes his pursuers, so a Golden Age gathering usually sided with the law-breaking actor and protected him when hunted by the authorities. Sancho summed up the situation very accurately when after he and his master had passed through an unpleasant experience with a group of actors he says to his master: "Take my advice and never pick a quarrel with play-actors; they are privileged people. I have known one of them sent to prison for two murders, and get off scot-free. For mark, your worship, as they are gay fellows, full of fun, everybody favors them; everybody defends, helps and likes them; especially if they belong to the royal and privileged companies, where all or most of them dress as if they were real princes."

Chapter XXXIII

CORNEILLE AND FRENCH CLASSICISM

THERE are three cardinal dates in French Dramatic History:

1636 Corneille's *Cid.*
1830 Victor Hugo's *Hernani.*
1897 Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac.*

The Cid with its attendant controversy established in France the reign of the Unities. *Hernani* brought to an abrupt close the two hundred year old sovereignty of the Unities and in its place started the short-lived vogue of romanticism. *Cyrano de Bergerac* promised to the theatrical world, sated with realism and naturalism, a renaissance of romanticism, but the expectation was not realized. *The Cid* and *Hernani* began their stage career amid fierce verbal and critical conflicts; *Cyrano de Bergerac* won every heart at its first showing.

The quarrel of the *Cid* was waged over the question of the correct use of the Unities. In *Hernani* it was a battle of the classicists and the romanticists. The story of *Hernani* and *Cyrano de Bergerac* falls within later volumes of this series; it is our task in this chapter to explain the significance of the quarrel of the *Cid*, "a very pretty quarrel as it stands." Discuss it we must even if "we should only spoil it by trying to explain it", as Sir Lucius O'Trigger declares of his own quarrel.

In the year 1636 Pierre Corneille, thirty years old, was the undisputed head of the dramatists in Paris. He had thus far covered a wide range in his dramatic work; comedy, tragicomedy, tragedy, all the orthodox forms of drama except farce and pastoral had received his attention; farce he had scorned

as beneath his dignity. His success lay in his plot construction, his vocabulary and his versification.

In his wide range of dramatic work he had failed in but a single branch,—tragedy. A classicist to the core, he had followed so closely the supposed rules of ancient Greek drama that he had even selected a purely Greek theme, *Medea*, and had brought out a play which failed to satisfy his critical contemporaries. When will dramatists cease to hark back to dead and gone epochs for their inspiration? Shakespeare did it, Dryden tried it, Corneille sought his inspiration there, Tennyson modeled his own plays after Elizabethan patterns, Grillparzer embroidered the legend of Sappho's love for Phaon, Hofmannsthal tried to add a romantic *Electra* to the classical originals of Sophocles and Euripides. *Cui bono?* Few but professional scholars are interested in such efforts; the great theatergoing public desires a stirring theme of contemporary life told in language that all can understand.

Corneille's failure in his *Medea* gave him pause. He had been too classical even for the classicists. He showed practical sense in studying the dramatic situation and in determining to give his public what it wanted. The dominant European dramatist of the day was Lope de Vega, the fecund Spanish playwright; why not base the next play on a live Spanish model instead of revamping trite Greek legends? He at once took up the study of Spanish; he made sufficient progress in the language to read a number of Spanish plays and he finally discovered what he considered a promising theme in *Las Mocedades del Cid* of the Spanish dramatist Guillen de Castro. This play of de Castro handled the life history of the famous Spanish fighter and freebooter Rodrigo Diaz de Bivar universally known as El Cid. After about eighteen months of preparation he brought out in 1636 his famous play *The Cid*. Convinced that he was about to introduce a new epoch in French drama, he was probably unprepared for the uproar which he aroused in the dramatic world of his day.

The plot of the *Cid* is as follows: Don Rodrigue, son of Don Diègue loves Chimène daughter of Don Gomès. The two

fathers quarrel and Gomès insults Diègue. Diègue attempts in vain to avenge the insult; enfeebled by age he induces his son to take up the quarrel. In a duel between Rodrigue and Gomès, the latter is killed. Hence the complication of the play. Chimène is torn by a conflict between her love and her honor which demands that she bring about punishment upon the murderer of her father; Rodrigue recognizes her dilemma and he feels keenly his own position, loving Chimène, yet convinced that his own honor had demanded that he challenge Gomès. Fortunately for Rodrigue, who has fallen from the king's favor because of the duel, the Moors suddenly attack Seville; Rodrigue, without awaiting orders from the king, gathers a group of his father's friends and surprises the Moors who had hoped to take the town unprepared. He performs prodigies of valor and captures with his own hands two Moorish kings; the kings themselves acknowledge his prowess by dubbing him El Cid,—"the warrior *par excellence.*" Rodrigue is again high in the king's favor but Chimène still presses her demand for punishment. Finally the king compromises by bidding Chimène select a champion who will challenge Rodrigue to a duel. Chimène agrees to marry the victor. The magnanimous Rodrigue refuses to take advantage of his superior skill in fencing with the inexperienced Sanche and the result is that although he greatly outfights his foe he does not slay him. Rodrigue now offers himself up to the vengeance of Chimène. The king finally suggests a further compromise; they are to postpone for a year the wedding, during which year Rodrigue shall conduct a vigorous campaign against the Moors.

The Cid was a real historical character; he lived in Spain in the eleventh century; he was a great warrior, who passed through political vicissitudes,—periods of royal favor and times of royal displeasure. He fought by turns on the side of the Christians and the Moors, finally suffering a defeat at the hands of the Moors and dying in 1099. He was buried near Burgos, Spain.

To the Spaniards the Cid is the great national hero, celebrated in poetry and in song. Every Spaniard is familiar with

the famous *Poema del Cid* which dates from about 1150, half a century after the Cid's death; it is probably a combination of previously written poems. Professor F. M. Warren [1] of Yale, in his edition of *Le Cid* takes a coldly dispassionate view of this idol of the Spanish: "Legend has transformed this border ruffian, who sold his might to Christian and infidel alike, into a national hero, a defender of the faith."

The quarrel of *The Cid* originated, in part, in the jealousy aroused by the fame which Corneille had won by his *Le Cid*. All his rivals were left in the shade by this play; we read that the box office receipts for *The Cid* were greater than those for any ten plays of his rivals. A French historian says of the play: "It is difficult to imagine the applause with which the court and the public greeted this play. People never wearied of seeing it; in society one heard no other topic discussed; everyone committed portions of it to memory; the lines were taught to young children; in many parts of France it became proverbial to say of a thing 'It is as beautiful as the *Cid*.'"

This in itself would have aroused the jealousy of Corneille's outdistanced rivals; but other causes contributed; Cardinal Richelieu became involved. It is well known that Richelieu dabbled in literature, not too successfully as Bulwer-Lytton hints in his play *Richelieu;* in that play Richelieu is pluming himself upon his poetic skill; Father Joseph mutters apart: "and such a poem!" It is possible, as Professor Warren remarks, that this jealousy was a contributing cause of the outbreak. But Corneille had given much occasion for hard feeling; he did not hesitate to call emphatic attention to his own merits. In a poem which he published while the world was ringing with acclamation of his *Cid* he gave vent to his resentment at the snubs and the neglect which he had received from the court and the critics previous to the appearance of the *Cid*.

His enemies now united, at first anonymously, but finally openly, urged on by Richelieu. He was accused of stealing his

[1] Corneille's *Le Cid,* edited by F. M. Warren. D. C. Heath & Co. Boston. 1908. In the preparation of this chapter we have made constant use of Professor Warren's edition of *The Cid*. It is a model of clearness and accuracy, indispensable to the advanced student of French literature.

plot from "a Spanish author"; soon a pamphlet written by Scudéry appeared, enumerating several specific faults: "The subject of the play was poor; it violated the chief rules of dramatic composition; the development of the plot was faulty; it contained a number of poor lines; the chief excellences of the poem were mostly stolen; in short, the poem did not deserve the favor with which it had been received."

Richelieu secretly urged Scudéry to bring the matter before the French Academy which Richelieu had recently founded; the Academy objected, but it did not dare to disobey its founder. They examined the play, wrote a report and submitted it to Richelieu. "Too favorable! Rewrite it!" was the order. The report was accordingly rewritten; the revised version appeared early in 1638. What had these minions of Richelieu to say for and against *The Cid?*

For the Cid: Some faint praise for the diction and the meter, praise carefully diluted by several counter criticisms. A lingering sense of fairness led them to end their report with these eulogistic words: "Nevertheless the naiveté and the vehemence of its emotions, the force and the delicacy of many of its sentiments and this inexplicable charm which blends with all its defects have won for it a high place among French poems of this kind."

We are especially interested in the enumerated defects, because they lead us into the vexed question of the observance of the Unities.

Against the Cid: The subject is not well chosen; the dénouement is faulty; it is loaded with useless episodes; decorum is lacking in numerous portions of the play; the stage arrangements are faulty; there are many defective lines; the diction is in places inelegant.

Let us take up these charges in detail. *First:* "The subject is not suitable." Corneille had attempted an impossible task. He had tried to crowd a romantic theme into a classical frame. Corneille's original Spanish author Guillen de Castro (1569-1631) had written a three act play called *Las Mocedades del Cid* (The Youthful Deeds of the Cid) followed by a sequel

Las Hazañas del Cid (The Exploits of the Cid). We have stated in the chapter on The Unities that Spanish writers as a whole had never acknowledged allegiance to the Unities. Following Spanish precedent de Castro had written a romantic play which violated all three Unities. In time the Spanish play covered about eighteen months; in place it spread over a considerable part of northern Spain; in action the plot was rambling, episodical, and contained as many as twenty ballads.

The problem confronting Corneille was to take this romantic unity-flouting material and force it into the narrow confines of the Unities. The action must be confined to one place; it must fall within about twenty four hours; it must omit all irrelevant elements. Corneille had undertaken an Herculean task. How did he perform it? First, he confined the action to various places within a single town,—Seville. Unity of Place, as thus observed, was a clear violation of the usual practice of the Greek tragedians; as a rule a Greek play proceeded from beginning to end with no change of place whatever. The exigencies of the Greek theater compelled that fixity. It was mere juggling on the part of the French dramatists when they extended the action first from one room in a palace to another room in the same palace, and gradually to another part of the same town. Why did Corneille select Seville? Ferdinand I, King of Castile and Leon, had in fact never been in control of Seville, as Corneille himself admits. The Spanish play as we have said ranged over northern Spain. Why then place the scene in a single town? To observe Unity of Place. Why select Seville in particular? Corneille needed a town on a river, because the Moors must arrive within twenty-four hours to conform to Unity of Time, and they could travel more quickly by water than by land. This reasoning seems so puerile that it is advisable to give the exact words of Corneille on this subject. In his *Examen* of this play, in which he answers his critics and gives his reasons for introducing various features into his play he says after describing the difficulty which he found in observing the "rule" of Unity of Time: "passons à celle de l'unité de lieu, qui ne m'a pas donné moins de gêne

en cette pièce. Je l'ai placé dans Séville, bien que don Fernand n'en aie jamais été le maître, et j'ai été obligé à cette falsification, pour former quelque vraisemblance à la descente des Maures, dont l'armée ne pouvait venir si vite par terre que par eau."

So much for Unity of Place. How does he handle Unity of Time? He admits that he makes a poor showing. He criticizes himself in remarkably frank words: "I cannot deny that the rule of twenty-four hours weighs too heavily upon the incidents of this play. The death of the count and the arrival of the Moors might come as near together as they do in my play because this arrival is a surprise, having nothing to do with the rest of the play; but we cannot make this plea in the case of the duel with Don Sanche (the champion of Chimène); the king was master of this situation and he could have selected for the duel a time later than two hours after the flight of the Moors. Rodrigue must have been so weary after his all night fight with the Moors that he deserved two or three days of rest, especially since there are some indications that he had not escaped unwounded; but I made no mention of this because to have done so would have interfered with the ending of the play." "This same rule", says Corneille, "also presses too hard upon Chimène in her second demand of justice from the king. She had made the first demand the night before and she had no reason for returning the next morning to make a fresh appeal, for she could not yet claim that the king had failed to keep his promise. In a novel she would have waited patiently seven or eight days. But the twenty-four hours did not permit it." With a pathos almost ludicrous he ends his plaint,— "Such is the inconvenience of the rule". (c'est l'incommodité de la règle). Further comment is unnecessary.

It is interesting to note that Corneille was much more successful in his management of the Unity of Action than of the other Unities in his play. Critics find in the presence of the Infanta (daughter of King Fernand) the only unnecessary character in the cast. In the Spanish original she had a more extended rôle. In Corneille's play she is represented as in

love with the Cid, but she is fighting valiantly to stifle her affection because she is well aware that as a king's daughter she could marry only a king or a prince of royal blood. The Infanta disturbs the Unity of Action because the plot would have remained essentially the same had she been entirely omitted from the *Dramatis Personæ.*

Second: "The dénouement is faulty." This objection does not seem perfectly valid. In the Spanish play about eighteen months passed between the slaying of Chimène's father and her betrothal to Rodrigue. In Corneille's play the betrothal, it is true, takes place within twenty-four hours after the killing of her father, but it is a betrothal forced upon her by the king and it is expressly stipulated that the wedding shall not take place within a year. Corneille has rather dextrously solved the problem by observing the Unity of Time without unduly shocking our sense of propriety.

Third: "The play is loaded with useless episodes." This is, upon the whole, an unfair criticism. The Infanta is the only really unessential feature.

Fourth: "Decorum is lacking in numerous portions of the play." This may be accepted as fair criticism. In Act III the sudden appearance of Rodrigue at the palace of Chimène after he has killed her father is rather shocking. The rebuke of Chimène's governess seems merited: "What does this mean? Whence comest thou, wretch? . . . To seek an asylum in the house of the dead! Never before has a murderer made such a place his refuge." Two objections to this sudden appearance of Rodrigue are noted by Corneille in his *Examen:* "Rodrigue should have had a sense of propriety sufficient to keep him away; Chimène should have refused to see him." Corneille takes refuge in the plea that the conversation between the lovers was so engrossing to the audience that few noticed the defect and the few who did, overlooked it. The most difficult ethical problem confronting Corneille in his *Examen* was to defend Chimène's exhortation to her lover to kill Sanche in the duel. Sanche had, with the absolute certainty that he could not cope with the puissant Cid, offered himself as her repre-

sentative that she might meet the clamorous revenge demands of her much vaunted honor; yet when this fond and foolish admirer offers to sacrifice his life for her, she begs the man, whose death she has been hysterically demanding, to kill the champion who is defending her "honor":

> Sors vainqueur d'un combat dont Chimène est le prix

No wonder that Scudéry, the arch-critic of Corneille pounced upon this action of Chimène's and denounced her as an unprincipled woman. Corneille offers an exceedingly feeble defense; he pleads that as soon as Chimène has withdrawn she tells her *confidante* Elvire that she is ashamed of herself and that she prays that neither of the combatants may win. No matter how often an admirer of Corneille may read the *Cid*, this exhortation of Chimène's "Come forth victorious from a duel of which Chimène is the prize" brings him up with a sudden shock, and he wonders just what, after all, honor meant to the insistent heroine.

Fifth: "The stage arrangements are faulty." This criticism introduces us to a form of setting which was employed in the days of the French Mysteries and had been carried down to Corneille's period. In the Mysteries this setting was known as the "multiple" type. All the places represented in a Mystery were placed simultaneously on the scene forming a continuous set extending across the stage, beginning, sometimes, with Heaven, and ending with Hell-mouth. The vacant space in front of this multiple setting was regarded as neutral ground; it could be thought of as representing any needed place; it could even stand for the interior of one of the houses which formed the stage setting. Persons who stood conversing in this neutral foreground could if necessary be imagined as actually within the house. In his eagerness to observe the Unity of Place Corneille hit upon the expedient of placing in the background a multiple setting which could be regarded as conforming to the Unity of Place. It was, indeed, Unity of Place in the sense that the "units" were all in one "place." The characters came forward into the neutral foreground and

talked; at one moment they were supposed to be in the rooms of the Infanta; at another in the palace of Chimène; at still another in the street. How was the audience to determine what spot was actually intended? "By following carefully the conversation or by using their imagination." But, as a fact, the audience was frequently so puzzled that it gave Scudéry and the critics of the French Academy a chance to complain that the indefiniteness of the setting was hurtful to "la bonne disposition du théâtre."

The criticisms regarding faulty lines and inelegant diction appeal more forcibly to a student of the French language than to a foreign dramatic critic. Professor Warren's notes on the *Cid* contain numerous illustrations of the strictures of the French Academy. He cites a line which is "poor in style and rhythm"

> "Qu' a vu toute la cour observer tant de fois."

An illustration of what the Academy regarded as an inelegant choice of words may be found in line 1229 where Rodrigue says:

> "épargne ma honte".

Voltaire agreed with the French academy that instead of *honte* Rodrigue should have used the word *pudeur*. Two other lines "poor in style and rhythm" are 1239 and 1240 cited by Professor Warren:

> "Et lorsque la valeur ne va point dans l'excès,
> Elle ne produit point de si rare succès.

But fairness demands the citation of at least a few of the lines which have made this play famous. Speaking of Rodrigue's father Elvire says: 35.

> "Ses rides sur son front ont gravé ses exploits."

Two lines, distinguished by their rhymes and by the effective way in which the words, when pronounced by a good actor,

bring out the thought of leaden-footed Justice, are the following: 783 and 784:

> Vous savez qu'elle marche avec tant de langueur,
> Qu'assez souvent le crime échappe à sa longueur.

Here is another famous verse:

> Cette obscure clarté qui tombe des étoiles.

We cite a sample of the minuteness of the examination to which the Academy subjected the diction of the *Cid*. In line 589 Don Sanche in his attempt to excuse the haughtiness of Chimène's father says:

> Commandez que son bras, nourri dans les alarmes.

The expression "an arm nourished" offended the critical ears of the French scholars.

What was the effect of this controversy upon Corneille? He found himself opposed on every hand. That he had attempted an impossible task, his labored attempts at explanation and excuse in his *Examen* amply prove. A romantic theme, which by its very nature defies the principles of classical drama cannot be crowded into a classical frame without damage to both frame and picture. In *The Cid* Corneille had made an honest effort to observe the classical rules, but the net result of his work was a play that was neither classical nor romantic. The buffeting which he received from hostile critics sobered him; henceforth he chose his themes more carefully; his subsequent plays conformed to the practice as well as to the theory of the Three Unities.

PERIOD OF GREAT ENGLISH DRAMA

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Chapter XXXIV

THE RISE OF A NEW SPIRIT IN ENGLISH DRAMA

The five English Tudors during their epoch-making reign of 118 years (1485–1603), left an indelible impress on drama; we are, in this chapter, chiefly concerned with Elizabeth, the last of the house. During the first two decades of her reign, beginning in 1558, her hands were filled with the religious and political troubles which she had inherited from her immediate predecessors, Edward and Mary; in twenty years she succeeded in restoring a fair degree of order in the state. The sturdy English spirit was impetuously asserting itself in exploration, discovery, and war; within a brief triennium (1577–80) Frobisher sailed far to the north, Humphrey Gilbert reached America, Drake circumnavigated the globe; soon after these momentous events Sir Walter Raleigh dispatched his expedition to the coast of Virginia; Davis outdistanced his predecessors in the search for the North Pole. Englishmen still speak with awe of the Spanish Armada of 1588; the student of history instinctively links it with another great Armada, that of the Persians, which two thousand years before, at Salamis, had wrecked the mighty plans of the invaders of Greece. The English still picture the advancing Spanish galleons, the bulldog tenacity of the British resistance, the wreck of the Spanish fleet, the delirium when the news of victory reached London; the wild joy in America on armistice day at the close of the World War gives us some idea of the scenes in London when the news of the defeat of the Spanish reached that city. The national feeling instantly focused upon Elizabeth as an incarnation of the spirit of the English nation; it is only by keeping in mind the human instinct of hero-worship, the

tendency to find or invent a concrete expression of our high ideals that we can understand the countless eulogies which the dramatists and poets showered upon their queen; Elizabeth became the Cynthia, the Gloriana of triumphant England.

Fortunately for the future of the drama, Elizabeth was by nature fond of elaborate ceremonial and impressive display; scholarly by nature she cultivated poetry and art, and by her example inspired her courtiers to follow her lead in producing masques and plays for the court. The closing years of the sixteenth century witnessed a promising artistic combination; a national spirit seeking in drama an outlet for its emotion; an astonishingly able group of dramatists ready to express the popular feeling; an idealized sovereign, a patron of art and the drama.

As the starting point of our discussion of the dramatic productions which resulted from this new spirit in English drama, we may refer the reader to the guild productions which were described in the chapter on the Mysteries; there we found a body of amateurs producing religious plays by authors whose names were then, and are even now, unknown; drama was still religious in its theme, but was on its way to secularization. The example of the guilds in presenting religious plays by amateurs proved contagious; other Englishmen found it amusing or edifying to bring out dramas less elaborate, but still teaching religious lessons or honoring some local saint. Gradually a wider range of subjects crept into their plays; local historic themes, some of which were purely secular, ultimately found their way upon the amateur stages in villages and towns.

Next we note the appearance of amateur road-companies, —not the first by any means, for we found traces of such traveling groups in the chapter on the Moralities, but we now detect clearer evidences of the existence of such companies. Occasionally a group of non-professional actors made a hit in their native village; the news of the success spread; perhaps it occurred to the company that they might be able to repeat their performances in a neighboring village; if they

succeeded it was only reasonable for them to expect, in return, at least a reimbursement of their traveling expenses. Here we have the beginning of the now almost extinct system of road-companies in England and America. If they made a series of successful ventures, they were encouraged to extend their tours; finally, with continued prosperity, they dropped their regular business occupations and devoted themselves entirely to their acting; the amateurs were now on the verge of professionalism; it was only a question of time when they would definitely cross the boundary.

Sooner or later the traveling amateurs encountered formidable rivals. In the villages to which they had gone on tour they came upon groups of mountebanks, jugglers, tight-rope walkers, fakers of various kinds who were traveling in quest of fugitive sixpences. These shrewd slight-of-hand artists had noted the popular response to the migrant amateur companies. "Why not insert a dramatic turn in our own show"? Their success in this new venture was sufficient to encourage them to continue and to expand the dramatic part of their program. For their stage they needed only Alexander Dumas' "four boards and a passion"; a village green, a cross-road, a barn, served as location, but above all the inner court of a rustic inn was found convenient. In the court-yard they erected a temporary stage; the guests of the hostelry looked down from the galleries, the casual spectators stood on the ground of the court-yard and arranged themselves entirely around the stage, precisely as two thousand years before the Greeks had surrounded the Dionysian dancers in the primitive Greek theater. If they preferred to erect the stage at the end of the court-yard opposite the entrance, the groundlings could still stand around three sides of the platform.

Here at last we have a body of professional actors; in this inn-yard auditorium with galleries we find a model of the future Elizabethan theater. Of the plays produced by these vagabond performers the less said the better; we are amused as we read the ethical boasting of their programs; nothing could be more uplifting than their themes, nor much worse

than their performance. These were the men who were primarily responsible for the legislation which as late as the days of the eminent Garrick branded that great artist with the legal stigma of "vagabond."

The nobility could not be expected to demean themselves by crowding around a group of tight-rope walkers posing as professional actors; they too, had their own entertainers, paid members of their retinue who not only performed for the delectation of their patrons, but were permitted to visit, during the summer at least, the palaces of other noblemen. Scorning the cross-roads and the inn-yards, they gave their performances in covered buildings, schools, public halls and churches. The livery which they wore, conspicuously displaying the arms of their noble patrons, was a guarantee that they would do nothing to disgrace the name of their protectors.

By the end of the fifteenth century we find two classes of professional actors; one faction lawless, dissipated, a danger to the community; the other orderly, decent, conscious of its responsibility as representative of a noble lord.

A third group of actors deserves mention. The court had its own companies of players. In the chapel royal of Henry Eighth and Elizabeth, we have a group of actors very different from any thus far described; this royal company consisted of eight boys and twenty-four men under the direction of a master; their duties, aside from singing, were to present masques and pageants for the entertainment of the court; the great wealth of the monarch made possible a display lavish beyond the resources of the noblemen. When Queen Elizabeth came to the throne the accident that her own dramatic taste differed from that of her father wrought a change in the history of the court drama. Elizabeth preferred legitimate plays to pageants and masques; the master of the chapel was kept busy in producing for the queen regular dramas,—histories, comedies, romances, tragedies; these plays were elaborately staged with painted settings. The children developed into well trained actors nominally amateur,

yet with the discipline of professionals; later they became successful rivals of the regulars.

The professional actors in London found the inn-yards unsatisfactory for several reasons; they were not always available for a performance; the stage was a temporary makeshift; the playgoers were never certain where they could find a company on a given day. These disadvantages finally led in 1576 to the erection of the first regular public theater in London, that of James Burbage. When this house was opened Shakespeare, a boy in his thirteenth year, was studying Latin in the Stratford grammar school; we may be certain that when the news of the opening of this theater reached Stratford it did not occur to him that in this house his own plays were some day to be acted.

By the year 1587 when Shakespeare was 23 years old and about to come to London to try his fortune, there were in that city three large theaters, enjoying an enormous patronage, abundantly supplied with well equipped actors, but greatly in need of suitable plays. The law of demand and supply was admirably illustrated in this emergency; at the moment when managers were calling for new plays there was forming in their city a group of bright young men who had resolved to make literature their life work; the most promising of these predecessors or contemporaries of Shakespeare were: Thomas Kyd, Christopher Marlowe, Robert Greene, George Peele, Thomas Lodge and Thomas Nash. The fortunes of these men we shall discuss in the following chapter; before doing so we must refer to a few important plays, the work of scholarly amateurs.

The Tudor patronage was not limited to the circle of the playwrights; it protected the actors when the growth of the Puritan movement threatened the existence of the profession. The England of the early Tudor days presents an amazing spectacle of glaring contrast, of splendor side by side with abject misery, of princely elegance and incredible coarseness in the same individual, of expensive costumes shockingly untidy, of palace floors covered with rushes that were indescrib-

ably unsanitary, of nobles and yokels side by side in the bear-baiting pits on the south bank of the Thames. Visitors from France, Italy and Holland were shocked by the unhygienic conditions in England as compared with those in their own lands. Nevertheless drama and elegant learning flourished; Queen Elizabeth and her courtiers studied Greek. Even more important for the future of drama was the significant fact that in spite of the coarseness and the obscenity of the day, the English scorned the abysmal vices of their continental neighbors.

In our first English comedies and our earliest tragedy we quickly detect the sturdy native elements underlying the technical trappings borrowed from Latin drama. When the Mysteries and the Moralities had reached their culmination and had begun their decline new forms of drama appeared in their place. The English Interlude formed a connecting link between the mediæval drama and that of the Elizabethan. John Heywood's *Four P's* had manifested the peculiar qualities of genuine English humor; the same robust national tone is found in the comedies *Ralph Roister Doister* and *Gammer Gurton's Needle.*

There was no possibility of mistaking the distinctively native humor in the English dramas which had up to this time appeared; it was however very evident that this comic element needed order and restraint. Herein lay the inestimable educational value of the ancient classical literature; we should not condemn too hastily the intrusion of this foreign influence into English literature; it conferred some decided benefits; to the prevailing looseness of dramatic structure it imparted order, discipline, logical arrangement; English drama was sorely in need of precisely this constructive element. One of the first lessons the English learned from their study of the Roman dramatists was that comedy and tragedy are distinct species; Seneca's plays were pure tragedy; Plautus and Terence were exclusively comic writers; some of the early Roman writers had cultivated both forms of drama but the only Roman playwrights known to the English dra-

matists of the sixteenth century were specialists in one or the other of these two branches. Thomas More in 1516 protested against the combination of comedy and tragedy in the same play; the Greeks had followed the principle of separation in their writings. Aristotle had intimated that the same man could not, or at least would not, write both tragedy and comedy; he hints that the writers of comedy were distinctly inferior to those who cultivated tragedy. By writing masterpieces in both species of drama Shakespeare triumphantly refuted this theory.

Another hint which the sixteenth century dramatists received from the classical writers was the division of a play into acts. By the first century B. C. the five act structure had become thoroughly recognized in classical drama; a division into acts presupposes orderly arrangement; if by way of experiment the student after reading that amazingly prolix romance of Lyly, *Euphues and his England*, will turn to the same author's five act plays, he will see how wholesome was the restraint which the adoption of the act structure placed upon the exuberant writers of the period.

A third gain was the greater variety of plots which the introduction of classic themes added to the repertoire of the dramatic writers. The Miracles, the Moralities, the Interludes had monotonously rung the changes on Biblical and ethical themes; the renaissance writers looked abroad for their material. Shakespeare was an indefatigable searcher in Italian literature and elsewhere for germinal ideas; when we glance over the titles of his plays and his sonnets,—*Timon of Athens*, *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Pericles*, *The Comedy of Errors* (based on the *Menaechmi* of Plautus), *Venus and Adonis*, *Lucrece*, we realize how much an acquaintance with the ancient classics had added to the topics available for an English dramatist.

In the early sixteenth century the revived study of ancient classical drama had begun to bear fruit in England. As early as 1527 we read of a performance of the *Menaechmi* by the boys of St. Paul's School; at the grammar schools and the

universities the performance of plays of Plautus and Terence in the original or in English translations, as well as Latin plays imitating classical models, became an ordinary occurrence.

In *Ralph Roister Doister*, dating from about 1535, only a few years after Heywood's *Four P's*, we have an example of English comedy appearing for the first time full-blown in a complete five-act play. This play is classic in its make-up but English in its spirit. That it is thoroughly classic in its structure is not surprising when we know the author of the play; Nicholas Udall was an Oxford man, serving in turn as headmaster of two famous classical schools, Eton and Westminster. True to his training as a classicist, he made a special study of Plautus and Terence and while at Eton he drilled his boys in the production of Latin plays; when, about 1535, he felt the need of an original English play for his students, he instinctively turned to his favorite Latin classics for model and material. From Plautus he borrowed the five-act structure; from Greek tragedy he took the idea of limiting the action to a single day; from the ancient Roman stage he adopted the convenient scenic arrangement of a background consisting of several private houses opening on a square in which the action was to take place. From the *Miles Gloriosus* of Plautus he took over the braggart soldier who is ready to fight until somebody accepts his challenge; from the *Captives* of Plautus he adopted the parasite; from Roman comedy as a whole he imbibed classic restraint and order in the arrangement of his plot. Surely an extensive list of borrowings, but note the original touches; the Latin *Pyrgopolinices* becomes Ralph Roister Doister; the Roman parasite Ergasilus is renamed Matthew Merrigreke; to the Latin characteristics of the parasite Udall added original touches which make Merrigreke a combination of the Roman parasite, the rascally valet of the Italian *Commedia dell'Arte* and the mediæval *Vice;* in creating an old nurse, Margery Mumblecrust, Udall was paving the way for a long line of subsequent nurses, a character represented most vividly by Juliet's nurse in Shakespeare. Latin in form, this play is English to the core in its

humor, its characterization, its portrayal of native customs, its general atmosphere.

Gammer Gurton's Needle, our second English comedy, dating about thirty years after *Ralph Roister Doister*, is, like its predecessor, an academic play, brought out in Cambridge University by an author whose name cannot be definitely determined. This play borrows from Roman comedy its form, but there the borrowing ceases; it is divided into the orthodox five acts; by limiting the action to a single day it conforms to the so-called Unity of Time; the back scene is the typical Roman setting of houses opening upon a court. The story can be told in a few lines; the old lady Gammer Gurton has lost her needle; a beggar who happens to be present accuses a neighboring dame of stealing it. A real *casus belli.* General alarm; the neighbors arrive and whole-heartedly join the free-for-all. Hostilities are suddenly halted by the discovery of the needle sticking in the trousers of one of the farmhands. Much ado about nothing. "Please excuse." Not a hefty plot but any modern university man familiar with college dramatics can picture the snap which those Cantabrigians put into the performance of this uproarious farce. Coarse indeed; it could not get by the dean in any modern college, but almost anything went in those lively days. The play is thoroughly native; read it for a glimpse of English life in the sixteenth century, and then note the type of collegiate play to which it has given place today, Barrie, Tchekoff, and Susan Glaspell.

The production before Queen Elizabeth in 1561 of the tragedy *Gorboduc or Ferrex and Porrex* written by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton was regarded then as it is considered now, one of the notable events in the annals of English tragedy. Whether as a perfect specimen of the influence of Seneca, or as an inspiring example of sturdy adherence on the part of the authors to a native British theme, the play deserves detailed consideration. That the tragedy is modeled upon the Senecan pattern is not surprising; the action of the authors in going straight to a British chronicle for their sub-

ject was profoundly significant, and a hopeful sign for the future of English drama. The collaborators had recourse to Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* for their theme; they found there the legend of an old monarch who divided his kingdom between his two sons, Ferrex and Porrex, an action which resulted in a succession of calamities. The Senecan features are glaringly evident; a bloody plot, a chorus, long harangues, ghosts, the five act structure. Sidney the admirer of Seneca praises *Gorboduc* as "full of stately speeches, and well-sounding phrases, clyming to the height of Seneca his stile"; with Horace's dictum in mind, *omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci* he praises *Gorboduc* as "full of notable moralitie, which it doth most delightfully teach, and so obtayne the very end of Poesie;" but as an ardent adherent of the Unities he is sorely grieved over the technical heresy of the author of *Gorboduc:* "For it is faulty both in place and time, the two necessary companions of all corporal actions. For where the stage should always represent but one place, and the uttermost time presupposed in it should be, both by Aristotle's precept and common reason, but one day, there is both many days and many places inartificially imagined." Here we have in succinct form the battle between the "Unity men" and the unfettered Englishmen on whose side Shakespeare was later to array himself.

A notable feature of this play is the dumb-show which precedes each act; for this suggestion the authors were probably indebted to the Italian inter-act diversions known as *intermedii;* these were spectacular entertainments placed between the acts of a regular play for the purpose of entertainment; we find similar diversions in Spanish plays of the period. Professor Cunliffe says that the authors of *Gorboduc* in adopting this feature of Italian drama made an important change in the method of using the device; the Italians placed it at the end of the acts to amuse the audience; Sackville and Norton placed their "dumb-show" at the beginning of each act to explain the significance of the coming events. *Gorboduc* is a striking example of the "play with a purpose"; Mr. L. H.

Courtney in *Notes and Queries* says that "the play is rather a political argument than a simple tragedy." A careful perusal of the play will confirm the belief that the authors were actuated by a profound conviction that Queen Elizabeth should marry and leave an heir; a single quotation from the closing speech sufficiently represents a dozen other lines emphasizing the same thought:

> "And this doth growe when loe unto the prince,
> Whom death or sodeine happe of life bereaves,
> No certaine heire remaines."

We can easily imagine the eager scrutiny which the courtly audience gave to Elizabeth's countenance when these bits of pointed personal advice were aimed directly at her through the mouths of the characters. Evidently she was not offended; a few days later she ordered a repetition of the tragedy in her own hall. Did she take the advice of her courtiers? That is one of the secrets of history; at any rate she did not leave an heir-apparent.

Most outlines of early English tragedy limit their treatment of this period to *Gorboduc;* we may however add Gascoigne's *Jocasta*, which is noticed in our chapter on Seneca. *Gismond of Salerne*, *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, *The True Chronicle History of King Leir*, *Locrine*, *Selimus* all deserve passing mention though as a whole they simply reproduce Senecan features which are outlined in our discussion of *Gorboduc* and are more fully treated in the chapter on Seneca. In *Gismond of Salerne* we have a dumb show. From the *Misfortunes of Arthur* we quote a line or two in illustration of the short, snappy speech called *Stichomythia:*

> *Cador:* To rule is much. *Arthur:* Small if we covet naught.
> *Ca.:* Who covets not a crowne? *Ar.:* He that discernes the sword aloft.
> *Ca.:* Right holdes it up. *Ar.:* Wrong puts it downe.

That eccentric critic Leo Tolstoy pronounced *The True Chronicle History of King Leir* "incomparably and in every respect

superior to Shakespeare's adaptation." *Locrine* presents a strong tincture of Seneca; a dumb-show, a chorus, two ghosts, a revenge motive, and numerous straight translations from the original Latin.

It might have been thought that there were in *Gorboduc*, and other tragedies of the kind, horrors enough to satisfy the rough soldiers and sailors in an English audience, but the classical rule of keeping all sanguinary actions out of sight and leaving to a messenger the recital of the gruesome details proved as fatal a procedure in the English theater as it had been in ancient Roman times. The English audience wanted "to be shown"; classical tragedians talked in awestruck language of the scenes which had been enacted off stage, but they could not under "the rules" actually show these actions on the stage; as a result the English common people turned their back on the tragedies and left these rhetorical horrors to the classicists. The playwrights who made their living by their pens finally saw their danger and adjusted their work to the situation; some of them still adhered essentially to the Senecan technique but they boldly presented on the stage the bloody scenes which in the strictly classical plays the messenger had merely reported.

To this new type of play the name tragedy-of-blood has been given. *Locrine*, attributed by some scholars to George Peele is the first example of the species; a notable departure from strictly classical principles is the introduction into this play of comic relief as an integral part of the action. The most famous example of this type is Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* which we shall discuss in the following chapter. The favorable reception of this play resulted in a quick succession of tragedies of the same general type; among them are: *The Jew of Malta*, by Marlowe, *Titus Andronicus*, attributed in part at least to Shakespeare, *Alphonsus of Germany* by an unknown author and the first *Hamlet*, by an author not determined.

A short-lived but extremely interesting form of sixteenth century drama was the so-called domestic tragedy; its

essential feature is the dramatic treatment of actual murders which had been perpetrated during the lifetime of the members of the audience. Murder cases were as eagerly talked about in those days as they are read about in our own times. Those wide-awake theater men Holinshed and Stow, always having an eye to business, were in the habit of collecting the available data regarding celebrated murders, and recording them for future reference. Out of the presumably large number of tragedies of this type we have today the titles of nine.

The typical extant play of this species is the famous *Arden of Faversham* brought out in 1592, forty years after the occurrence of the murder of which it treats. The theme is essentially that of the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus,—an unfaithful wife is spurred on by her lover to murder her husband. Attributed to Shakespeare by the Germans Tieck and Goethe, modern Shakespearean scholars are cautious about accepting this suggested authorship. The reader of *Othello* and *Macbeth* will find in the doings of Lady Macbeth and the outburst of Othello's grief some striking similarities to the actions of the heroine Alice in *Arden*. This strange form of pre-Shakespearean drama seems to have lasted less than twenty years,—from 1592 to 1608 to be exact. The significance of domestic tragedy lies in its definite break with the old Senecan machinery,—the dumb-show, the chorus, the rigid meter. In the introduction of contemporaneous events into their tragedies we have the beginning of the "current issue" type of drama, so abundantly exemplified by Ibsen and other modern dramatists.

In our reading of English drama we frequently come upon the word chronicle play and, now and then, we find certain of Shakespeare's historical dramas placed under this category. The chronicle play had its rise during the latter part of the sixteenth century and it therefore falls within the scope of our present chapter; this type of play is exactly what its title indicates, a narrative of historical events in dramatic form; its defect is the general looseness of its structure; the only

unity is that of theme; detailed unity, in the old classical sense that each incident leads to the next by an organic connection of inevitability or at least of probability is entirely lacking. Three extant plays on the theme of King John of England, illustrate the origin, the growth and the fruition of this type of play. John Bale wrote a Morality *King John*, dating somewhat earlier than 1553; about thirty-five years later (between 1587 and 1591) an unknown author composed a typical chronicle play, *The Troublesome Reign of King John*. When, in 1594, Shakespeare dramatized the same theme in his *King John* the chronicle play had developed into a romantic tragedy. Marlowe has the distinction of writing not only the first chronicle play deserving the name of genuine historical drama,—*Edward II*, but also the historical play which became the standard of its type and set the pace for all subsequent writers; *Tamburlaine*, composed when Marlowe was but 23 years of age, will be discussed more fully in the chapter on Shakespeare.

Two forms of drama not easily distinguishable,—romantic comedy and the pastoral, may be dismissed with brief mention because these species never had in England the vogue which they attained in Italy; they have much in common, the idyllic life of youths and maidens, their romantic adventures, their light and witty conversation and repartee. For the perfection of this romantic comedy we should read Shakespeare's *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*; the woodland scenes in Green's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* also afford excellent examples of the type. *The Merry Devil of Edmonton* by an unknown author has been called the best known example of romantic comedy outside of Shakespeare. Of the pastoral the best examples are *The Faithful Shepherdess* and Jonson's incomplete *Sad Shepherd*.

The dozen or more species of English drama which appeared in the seventeenth century may be divided roughly into popular drama, academic drama and court drama. We have adduced examples of the first two classes; we conclude our sketch of seventeenth century English drama with a brief

treatment of court plays; this species may be subdivided into court comedy and masques.

Court comedy was designed primarily to give pleasure to the sovereign; this gratification consisted largely of an adulation which to democratic ears occasionally seems greatly overdone; the Virgin Queen apparently had an unlimited capacity for absorbing praise. The outstanding purveyor of these eulogies was John Lyly the author of the courtly *Euphues;* his *Endimion,* mentioned elsewhere, is the classic example of this kind of comedy. Lyly's success instigated several plays along the same line.

Another type of comedy made popular by Lyly was characterized by a dream-setting and a *dramatis personae* of girls masquerading as boys indulging in gay but innocent conversation. Shakespeare, Fletcher and Ben Jonson took up and developed to perfection this style of play.

Masques, designed like the court comedy to gratify royalty, differed from comedy in content and in the manner of their presentation. The actors were members of the aristocracy; even royalty deigned occasionally to appear on the stage in these masques. The histrionic demands were slight; grace and beauty were the chief essentials; the spoken lines were secondary; the supremely important feature was the setting, on the production of which fabulous sums were lavished. Henry VIII imported the masque from Italy in 1512; Henry, and especially his daughter Elizabeth, showed occasional restraint in spending the money of their hard pressed subjects; it was only when the Stuarts followed the Tudors that the reckless squandering of the people's treasure began in earnest. A coterie of high grade poets, Ben Jonson at the head, provided the supply of masques; coöperating with Jonson was the famous artist Inigo Jones, who served as manager and stage director. Not only the court, but noblemen who wished to gain or retain the favor of the throne, rivaled one another in their expenditures.

In 1634 the banquet room at Whitehall witnessed one of the most elaborate displays in the annals of royal entertain-

ment; the members of the Inns of Court presented a masque entitled *The Triumph of Peace* written by Shirley and produced by Inigo Jones; on this single masque no less than one hundred thousand dollars were expended. One hundred thousand dollars on a single work, and this in 1634! As we stand today in this palace at Whitehall we may see the fatal window through which but fifteen years later the Stuart king, Charles I, was to make his eternal exit, bringing to a peremptory pause, for a dozen momentous years, the royal patronage of the drama.

CHAPTER XXXV

SHAKESPEARE'S IMMEDIATE PREDECESSORS AND CONTEMPORARIES

IN taking up the group of Elizabethan dramatists whose names are associated with Shakespeare, the historian is at once confronted by the problem of the best arrangement of his material. Using Shakespeare's dates (1564-1616) as a basis he may arrange his playwrights in a strictly chronological order; he may group them according to their dominant style, essentially the method which we employed in the previous chapter; he may classify them as university or non-university men, calling them the "University Wits" or "The Scholar Poets." We have decided to arrange them in two groups:

a. His Immediate Predecessors.

b. His Contemporaries.

The title "Immediate Predecessors" requires explanation; it might be understood as referring only to dramatists whose birth and death preceded that of Shakespeare; as a fact however all of the men whom we shall discuss under this group were living and working during Shakespeare's own lifetime. It is certainly anomalous to call Marlowe, who was born in the same year as Shakespeare, a predecessor of that dramatist, yet the approved classification puts him in this category. The advantage of this particular arrangement is that it gives us an opportunity of studying in a group the work of several men who though born only a few years before Shakespeare can clearly be shown to have influenced his work; two of these writers are John Lyly and Christopher Marlowe. Our general classification as "Immediate Predecessors" of Shakespeare does not preclude such a minor group as "University Poets," made

up chiefly of Lyly, Kyd, Lodge, Marlowe, Greene, Peele and Nash, with whom we shall begin. The peculiarly intimate connection between Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe has led us to combine the discussions of these two men in the next chapter.

When, in 1590 or shortly before, Shakespeare went to London to seek his fortune, he found there a group of young poets who were already cultivating the dramatic field. To this coterie various distinguishing names have been applied; they are sometimes called the "Early Elizabethans" (as a matter of fact Elizabeth had been on the throne about thirty years when Shakespeare reached London); occasionally they are labeled "The Scholar Poets"; a catching and appropriate designation was 'The University Wits."

That the reader may master at a glance the chronological order of these seven poets as compared with Shakespeare, (1564-1616) we give the dates of their birth and death as fixed by Allardyce Nicoll in his *British Drama.* Authorities differ on several and Professor Nicoll intimates by his interrogation marks that he shares the uncertainty in a few instances:—

John Lyly	1554?–1606
Thomas Kyd	1557?–1595
Thomas Lodge	1558?–1625
Christopher Marlowe	1564 –1593
Robert Greene	1560?–1592
George Peele	1558?–1597
Thomas Nash	1567 –1601

It will be noticed how closely the birth years of these men correspond to that of Shakespeare. John Lyly, the oldest, was born only ten years before Shakespeare; Thomas Nash, the youngest, only three years after him. Note also the astonishingly premature deaths of these men. Kyd was but thirty-eight when he died, Marlowe twenty-nine, Greene thirty-two, Peele thirty-nine, Nash thirty-four, Lyly and Shakespeare but

fifty-two. Lodge dying at sixty-seven was the only one who approximated the scriptural three score and ten.

These figures of early mortality, so far below the tables of expectation of modern life insurance companies, are striking evidence of the gay life, the untimely sapping of the physical vigor of these Bohemian dramatists. Of the seven Marlowe, Green, Peele and Nash were closely connected by ties of friendship; all except Marlowe were of gentle birth, highly educated, and notably gifted as poets.

These "Scholar Poets" were fully persuaded of their superiority to the rival playwrights who had not had the advantage of a university education. In their writings we find far too many scornful references to the "upstarts" who were attempting to compete with real scholars in dramatic composition.

John Lyly was the first of the group to arrive in London. Although he belongs to this coterie he is usually regarded as working apart from them by reason of his close attachment to the court; his plays were presented before the Queen and her circle rather than on the public stages.

Lyly was a graduate of Oxford with the degrees of B. A. and M. A.; Later he received a Master's degree from Cambridge. Although we are considering him solely as a dramatist we must refer to the diction of his *Euphues,* that novel which set the dandies of Elizabeth's court wild with delight. As Blount who in 1632, after the author's death, arranged the first edition of Lyly's plays, well said: "Our nation are in his debt, for a new English which he taught them . . . and that Beauty in court which could not parley Euphuism was as little regarded as she which now there speaks not French."

Every student of English literature has read or has at least tried to read those amazing works of Lyly: *Euphues, The Anatomy of Wit,* and its sequel *Euphues and his England.* To *parley Euphuism* became the rage at court. But *Euphuism* was not exclusively an English fad; the movement which it represented swept through the cultured nations of

the continent; in Italy it was known as *Marinism* from the poet Marini, who brought it into vogue; in Spain it was called *Gongorism* from the Spanish bard Gongora whose poems reflect the fad; *hablar cultos* meant at the court of Spain exactly what *parley Euphuism* signified to the courtiers of Elizabeth; even the logical French mind succumbed to the charm until Molière laughed it out of court with his *Les Précieuses Ridicules.*

It is not germane to our present purpose to go into the details of this ornate fad which had its origin in an imitation of Cicero's elaborately rounded periods. An example or two from the French affectations which Molière so mercilessly mocked will illustrate the French form of the craze; to these *Précieuses* teeth were "*L'ameublement de la bouche*"; a chair, "*une commodité de la conversation*"; to dine was "*prendre les nécessités méridionales.*"

Shakespeare, ever awake to the fashions and follies of his day, though scorning to devote an entire play to a discussion of "current issues," has a fascinating way of giving a genial side thrust at some of the men who were aping the current fads. That he had his eye on the absurdities of *Euphuism* is conclusively shown by the speech of Falstaff to Prince Hal, an harangue which will repay careful study as an epitome of the ridiculous elements of the movement. In Henry IV, II, 4, lines 438–461, occurs this delicious parody:

> "*Harry, I do not only marvel where thou spendest thy time, but also how thou art accompanied; for though the camomile, the more it is trodden on the faster it grows, yet youth, the more it is wasted the sooner it wears. . . . If, then, thou be son to me, here lies the point; why, being son to me, are thou so pointed at? Shall the blessed sun of heaven prove a micher and eat blackberries? A question not to be asked. Shall the son of England prove a thief and take purses? A question to be asked. There is a thing, Harry, which thou hast often heard of, and it is known to many in our land by the name of pitch; this pitch, as ancient writers do report, doth defile, so doth the company thou keepest: for, Harry, now I do not speak to thee in drink but in tears, not in pleasure but in passion, not in words only, but in woes also.*"

A single quotation from Lyly's *Campaspe* illustrates the artificial rhetorical antitheses which are one of the marked characteristics of *Euphuism.*

Act I. Scene 3.

"Why," said I, "he is a king." He answered, "Why, I am a philosopher."

"Why, but he is Alexander!" "I, but I am Diogenes."

We mention this strange movement in connection with Lyly because it found its flamboyant way into his plays, and by its insufferable pomposity disgusts the uninitiated reader. But, in passing, it is only fair to present the advantages of this *Euphuism* in Lyly's plays; it showed what style, in moderation, at least, could add to drama. In the Miracles and the Moralities we find a story, an arrangement of incidents sufficient to constitute a crude plot, but nothing resembling the style which is one of the most marked characteristics of the ancient classical authors; *Euphuism* is simply style gone mad. Lyly was a classicist, not as scholarly as Jonson or Chapman, but he was a university trained man and this implied at least a gentlemanly knowledge of the classics; he knew at first hand Pliny, Plutarch, Lucian and, above all, Ovid. He had mastered Pliny's *Natural History*. Nobody equaled him in digging out odd bits of knowledge which amazed his readers and excited the ridicule of his rivals; his casual reference to the fish *Scolopidus* originated in a pseudo-Plutarch work entitled *De fluviis*. After the Euphuistic fad had passed it was found that the plays of Lyly really had that ineffable quality called for want of a better word "style"; this was the quality which at that time our drama, still in the formative stage, especially needed. The time was destined to come when, (as in Addison's *Cato)* style was to supplant dramatic fervor but that was a phenomenon of the distant future. Lyly is also notable for his contribution to the formation of that rare form of English drama known as high comedy or comedy of manners. It appeals to a highly sophisticated audience; it never descends to farce; it satirizes with a well-bred smile the

follies of the day, especially those of the higher classes; good form is one of its essentials. Lyly never attained in his plays a supreme height but we may detect in them some of the qualities of this high comedy: graceful references to persons and events of the day, comments elegantly cynical, or politely sportive, allusions to the court and the courtiers, thrusts which occasionally came dangerously close to personalities irritating to the queen; all this was couched in elegant language. Professor Baker phrases it concisely in his article on Lyly in the *Cambridge History of English Literature:* "He attains, even if somewhat hazily, that great dramatic form, 'high comedy.' " That the reader should not lay too much stress upon Lyly's "attainment" of high comedy is emphasized by the fact that Professor Baker's own classification of Lyly's comedies as "allegorical," "pastoral," "a comedy on the model of Plautus," and a "comedy in a class by itself,"—*Alexander and Campaspe*, does not mention any of these as genuine examples of high comedy. The classification of three of Lyly's plays as "allegorical,"—*Endimion, Sapho and Phao*, and *Mydas*—makes it pertinent to touch on the vexed question regarding the significance of the language which he so discreetly veiled in allegorical form. To give all the interpretations suggested for these three plays would require much space. *Endimion* in particular has caused endless wrangling; Professor Baker's interpretation may be quoted as the opinion of an authority: "*Endimion*, perhaps the most complete example of Lyly's allegorical comedy, presents the apology of Leicester to the Queen for his secret marriage with Lettice, Countess of Essex. *Sapho and Phao* is full of allusions to the coquetting of the queen with the Duc d'Alençon and his wrathful departure from England in February, 1582. *Mydas* allegorises, though with less detail than the others, as to the designs of Philip II on the English throne, and the Spanish Armada."

The fact that Thomas Kyd was probably not a university man would exclude him from the coterie of "University Wits" as the little group of dramatists whom we are considering is

frequently called; on the other hand his knowledge of Latin, French, Italian, and Spanish, justifies his inclusion in the list of "Scholar Poets," the title which we have preferred. We know less about the life of Kyd than of any other of the leading English dramatists. The dates of his birth and death are disputed; 1557 or 1558 for his birth, 1595 or "thereabouts" for his death represent a cross section of the opinion of the critics. We base our knowledge of his father's name and of the education of the son upon an authentic reference to the Merchant Taylor's School in London; in October 1565 a certain "Thomas Kydd, son of Francis Scrivener" entered that school. The peculiarity of the alleged name of the father, "Francis Scrivener" at once attracts our attention; it was probably regarded in Kyd's own time as a corruption or deliberate condensation of "Francis Kyd, *Scrivener*," the word *Scrivener* referring to the father's profession as notary. If the Thomas Kydd who entered this school was the dramatist, and if his father was really a scrivener or notary, we have the key to Nash's sneering remark regarding certain "shifting companions that leave the trade of *noverint* whereto they were born and busie themselves with the endeavours of art." To this somewhat dubious notice regarding his birth and his education we are able to add but a brief item or two; in 1570, at a time when he could not have been more than 13 years old, he entered the service of a lord, possibly the Earl of Essex. True to the record of his fast-living, early-dying colleagues, he passed away at 37 or thereabouts. He and Robert Greene died in poverty; like his boon companion Christopher Marlowe he had seen the inside of a prison; with that friend he had borne the social and religious stigma of atheism. Kyd's name is most conspicuously connected today with his play *The Spanish Tragedy*, and the vexed question regarding the authorship of the earlier *Hamlet*, the *Ur-Hamlet*, which was the original of Shakespeare's own play of that name.

Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* shares with Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* the supreme praise, the withering ridicule, the ludicrous

parodies of the pre-Shakespearean critics. We shall not attempt to list the works attributed to him, nor weigh the arguments tending to disprove his authorship of these plays. Boas [1] is convinced that, with the single exception of a paraphrase of the French dramatist Garnier's *Cornelia, The Spanish Tragedy* is the only play which can with certainty be ascribed to Kyd.

The estimates of the date of the first performance of *The Spanish Tragedy* range from 1586 to 1588. It had a phenomenal run of half a century, passing through translations and adaptations to the stage of many continental countries. Its two main themes, insanity and revenge, are purely Senecan; we have in the familiar ghost, the typical piling up of the dead, a genuine specimen of the shivery tragedy of blood. There must have been some good workmanship in a play which could for 50 years please continental as well as British audiences. Those qualities are manifest to the impartial observer; it has the dramatic element upon which Aristotle lays supreme stress,—an orderly plot; the characters are lifelike; the author has a keen eye for stage effects; he instinctively realized the inestimable advantage of depicting stirring scenes before the eyes of the audience rather than in placing reliance upon a messenger's report. It would be impossible precisely to estimate the influence of *The Spanish Tragedy* upon subsequent drama; *The Jew of Malta, Titus Andronicus,* even *Hamlet* are regarded by competent critics as direct descendants of Kyd's play.

The disappearance of the *Ur-Hamlet* is one of the major losses which the literary world has sustained. We know that there was such a play and that it dated from a period earlier than Shakespeare's own tragedy; we possess some quotations from the lost play, few indeed, yet sufficient to give us some insight into the plot. Who was the author of this original *Hamlet?* There is rather general agreement that Kyd should be credited with the work but influential voices are raised in opposition to the claim. The arguments in favor of the Kyd authorship are the many close resemblances between the *Ham-*

[1] Shakespeare and His Predecessors, Frederick S. Boas, Scribner, New York.

let of Shakespeare and *The Spanish Tragedy* of Kyd. It is taken for granted that the Shakespearean plot retains the essential features of the original play; granting this assumption we are told that the *Ur-Hamlet* and the *Spanish Tragedy* were so much alike that the same hand must have written both. But let us examine this argument more closely. Specifically we have in the two plays the ghost of a murdered man; this is a notorious characteristic of Seneca; "therefore," runs the argument, "the author of both plays (*Ur-Hamlet* and *The Spanish Tragedy)* must have been familiar with Seneca." No fault can be found with the conclusion; a dozen English dramatists drew heavily on Seneca. Now follows what seems to be an illogical bit of reasoning. Nash, in 1589, sneers at the author of the *Ur-Hamlet*, as a man deeply versed in "English Seneca": "Kyd, the author of *The Spanish Tragedy* was deeply versed in Seneca; therefore Kyd must have written the *Ur-Hamlet*." A complete *non sequitur* as the logicians would say.

Professor Joseph Quincy Adams,[1] one of the opponents of the Kyd-Hamlet theory, presents a good case against it, using in his own service the arguments which the opposing party had employed. Mr. Adams marshals the numerous resemblances between the extant *Hamlet* and *The Spanish Tragedy*. They certainly present very striking parallels; a play within a play, a ghost, a revenge motive (In *The Spanish Tragedy* a father avenges his murdered son; in *Hamlet* a son his murdered father); both avengers hesitate at the critical moment when vengeance is within their reach. Assuming as the Kyd-Hamlet theorists do that these similarities existed in the *Ur-Hamlet* the two plays have a striking resemblance. What does this prove? "That the same man wrote both plays," say the Kyd-Hamlet scholars. "Exactly the opposite," says Professor Adams; "it is incredible that Kyd should have written two plays so much alike." The critics of his day would have pounced upon him in a moment. Professor Adams suggests, very pertinently, that the manifest closeness of the *Ur-Hamlet*

[1] A Life of William Shakespeare, J. Q. Adams, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1923.

with the *Spanish Tragedy* is an indication of separate authorship; that the original *Hamlet* was not the work of Kyd but was the product of a man who copied the main incidents and even the details of Kyd's play.

We must dismiss much more briefly some of the minor dramatists of our group of Scholar Poets.

Thomas Lodge (about 1558-1625) was an Oxford man, B. A. 1577, M. A. 1581. His social standing is attested by the fact that his father, Sir Thomas Lodge, was Lord Mayor of London in 1562–63. Thomas Lodge began the study of law at the age of 20, upon entering Lincoln's Inn. In middle life we find him taking a medical degree at Avignon in 1600 and, two years later, receiving an M. D. degree from Oxford. When we study the career of men like Shakespeare and Ibsen, who devoted themselves unremittingly to their work as dramatic craftsmen, we can hardly expect from a man like Lodge a dramatic output which would place him in the class of Shakespeare or Marlowe. His plays were accordingly few in quantity though fair in quality but even in the limited list of plays attributed to him we must transfer a considerable portion of the honor to the men with whom he collaborated. Three or four of his dramas are known to college students by title at least; among these is "*A Looking Glasse for London and England*"; Robert Green deserves part of the credit of this play. Various critics assign to Lodge a share in *Mucedorus and Amadine*, *George-a-Greene*, *the Pinner of Wakefield*, *The Troublesome Raigne of John*, *King of England*, and Shakespeare's second part of *Henry VI*. Of Lodge's *The Wounds of Civil War*, the best the critics can say is that it is "a good second-rate piece."

There is a difference of opinion regarding the birth year of Robert Greene. Nicoll puts it conjecturally in 1560; the biographer in the new *Encyclopædia Britannica* assigns it to 1558. There is, however, agreement that his death occurred in 1592. He entered St. John's College, Cambridge in 1575

and was awarded the B.A. degree in 1579; four years later he received his M.A. from the same university; he subsequently received a master's degree from Oxford; he was thus enabled in his published works to style himself—*Utriusque Academiae in Artibus Magister*. His constant references to himself as a Master of Arts of both Cambridge and Oxford gave Thomas Nash, "that biting satirist," a chance to burlesque the high sounding Latin of his boastful friend: "*Utriusque Academiae Robertus Greene*," is the label which Nash loved to attach to his academic associate of the double distinction.

In our sketch of Thomas Lodge we had occasion to mention Greene's collaboration. We have today only four plays which are attributed to Greene as the sole author: the *Comical History of Alphonsus, King of Arragon*, the *Honorable History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, *The History of Orlando Furioso*, and *The Scottish History of James IV*. No one seems willing today to credit Greene with the charming picture of English life which has come down to us under the title *George-a-Greene, the Pinner of Wakefield*.

We have found no modern critic who claims that Robert Greene's dramatic genius is comparable to that of his friend Marlowe: "imitative yet little bound by precept or example" is Professor Schelling's terse criticism. Some of his good qualities are comic humor, graceful dialogue, excellent versification, skill in devising genuinely dramatic effects by the simplest means. The biographer in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* concludes his article on Greene with the gracious acknowledgement that he is "indisputably one of the most attractive of early English dramatic authors."

Greene in his *Groatsworth of Wit* utters against young Shakespeare a slur so vicious that our only consolation in reading the screed is the fact that Henry Chettle, the editor of the *Groatsworth* felt so ashamed of the necessity of including Greene's attack in his own editorial work that in a pamphlet, *Kind Hart's Dreame*, dated three months after the publication of *Groatsworth*, Chettle pays Shakespeare a tribute

as hearty and appreciative as Greene's utterance was bitter and jealous. In the very year in which Greene died, 1592, Lord Strange's men brought out at the Rose Theatre, on the Bankside, London, part I of *Henry VI*. Shakespeare is known to have collaborated in this play; he was at this time only twenty-eight years old, but it is clear that he had already achieved fame enough to arouse the jealousy of his professional rivals. Greene, embittered by the recollection of the shipwreck which he had made of his own life, could not bear the thought that the future was to confer upon his rival honors which could never be his own. In his *Groatsworth of Wit* he urges his three old friends, Marlowe, Peele, and Nash to repent before it is too late. In the passage addressed to Peele occurs the thinly veiled allusion to Shakespeare as "an upstart crow beautified with our feathers, that with his Tiger's heart wrapt in a player's hide supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank-verse as the best of you; and being an absolute Johannes-fac-totum, is in his own conceit the only shake-scene in a country." Despite efforts of recent scholars to interpret the words as an attack on the actor who delivered the lines in *Henry VI*, critics of the caliber of Boas and Schelling unhesitatingly refer them to Shakespeare. Henry Chettle's apology deserves quotation in full, not only because of its gracious appreciation of Shakespeare's personal character, but because it is the earliest extant complimentary reference to that writer:

"I am as sorry as if the original fault had been my fault, because myself have seen his demeanour no less civil than be excellent in the quality he professes; besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing, that approves his art." Greene's words, the splenetic attack by a dying man, are more than counterbalanced by Chettle's tribute.

The story of his sodden life and his miserable death touch even a calloused heart. He died in the house of a poor shoemaker, attended only by his landlady, Mrs. Isam, and two

women, one of whom was the sister of a thief known as "Cutting Ball." In his last moments he gave a bond for ten pounds to the shoemaker who had befriended him and he appended a note to the wife whom he had long ago abandoned; "Doll, I charge thee, by the love of our youth and by my soul's rest, that thou wilt see this man paid; for if he and his wife had not succored me, I had died in the streets—Robert Greene."

Thomas Nashe calls his colleague George Peele "the chief supporter of pleasure now living, the Atlas of poetry, and *primus verborum artifex*." Two of these phrases,—"the chief supporter of pleasance," and *primus verborum artifex* give us the key to Peele's personality and his art: "The humorist" and "The artist of words"; for the "humorist" read *The Old Wives' Tale;* for the "artist in words" study *David and Bethsabe.*

Who is this *verborum artifex?* An Oxford man studying first at what is now Pembroke College, and later at Christ Church. Born in 1558, he took his B.A. in 1577, his M. A. two years later; about 1580 he followed the inevitable urge to that Mecca of literary men of the period,—London. Of his life there we speak with reluctance; the story of the roistering young dramatists, their wild dissipation, their weeks of extravagance, followed by months of squalor and abject poverty, their pitiful death make the sensitive reader quail. We are saddened as we ponder the loss which the literary world has sustained by the untimely taking-off of these young giants.

Peele's best plays are *The Arraignment of Paris, The Old Wives' Tale, David and Bethsabe, Edward I,* and *The Battle of Alcazar.* Critics ascribe the keen pleasure which an Elizabethan audience took in the verbal artistry of their dramatists to the scantiness of the stage equipment of that period and the consequent necessity of appealing largely to the imagination of the audience. Precisely the same conditions prevailed in the theater at Athens with the result that some of the most splendid passages in Greek tragedy are verbal

descriptions of stirring events which occurred off-stage. Clytemnestra's narrative of the flashing of the beacon fires from Troy to Argos announcing the fall of the besieged city is one of the glorious things in the world's literature. Shakespeare and his fellow workers knew well the secret of this art; read the funeral oration of Marc Antony over the body of Caesar and imagine yourself listening to this speech as it was delivered by an Elizabethan star-actor. Peele was one of the leaders of the movement in cultivating the forensic and descriptive art. As a dramatist he is not rated very highly by modern critics; his poetic skill exceeded his dramatic powers. In characterization he is deficient, in construction careless; even his "art of words" is sometimes carried to an extreme where the sublimity hovers on the verge of the ridiculous. It is in his poetry especially that every now and then the reader comes upon a line or two that brings him to a sudden rapturous pause.

> "And round about the valley as ye pass,
> Ye may ne see for peeping flowers the grass."

Stow away in your memory this couplet from *The Arraignment of Paris*, side by side with that other immortal distich of a greater poet:

> "They flash upon that inward eye
> Which is the bliss of solitude."

Thomas Nash or Nashe (1567-1601) was a graduate of St. John's College, Cambridge, B.A. 1586. He was by far a better journalist than a dramatist; in fact, he would hardly call for more than a line or two in our sketch were it not for his famous preface to Greene's *Menaphon* (1589), which is quoted far more frequently than the work to which it was intended to serve merely as a foreword. Nash, "Railing Nashe," as they called him in his day, ridiculed Thomas Kyd for his alleged bombast. Nash's fame as a dramatist rests on three plays:

The Tale of Dogs, a political satire which landed him in jail. It has never been published.

Dido is really the completion for the stage of a play which his friend Marlowe left unfinished.

Summer's Last Will and Testimony is a court pastoral; it parodies incidentally Lyly's *Euphuism.*

His writings have the verve and swing of a practised newspaper man, but his learning gave solidity to his flowing style.

Under the second group, "The Contemporaries of Shakespeare" we have to consider eleven men whom we may arrange chronologically as follows: George Chapman (1559–1634); Thomas Middleton (1570–1627); Thomas Dekker (1570–1637); Ben Jonson (1574–1637); Cyril Tourneur (c. 1575–1626); John Marston (c. 1575–1634); John Webster (1580–c. 1625); Philip Massinger (1583–1640); Beaumont and Fletcher (1584–1616; 1579–1625); John Ford (1586–1640); James Shirley (1596–1666).

The merciless judgment of time often selects from the whole literary output of an artist a title or two which serve to subsequent generations as a tag. Were the author to return to life he might protest that the selection which posterity had made was unfair, that his best work had faded from the memory of men, that the inferior had been made the criterion of his plays as a whole. Rightly or wrongly the name of George Chapman recalls to the general reader of today two and only two of his works, his translation of Homer and his tragedy *Bussy d'Ambois.* For his translation of Homer we refer our readers to the admirable criticisms of Swinburne and Matthew Arnold. His *Bussy d'Ambois* entitles him to a place in our list of dramatists.

Born in 1559, five years before Shakespeare, Chapman outlived him by eighteen years. It is not certain that he was a university man; no official record of academic residence is extant, though Anthony Wood tells us that Chapman studied at Oxford. As a man he was held in esteem by his brother

dramatists. John Webster in the preface to his *White Devil* praises him; Ben Jonson told a friend that Chapman and Fletcher "were loved of him." His *Bussy d'Ambois* attained popularity sufficient to retain its place on the restoration stage. There is no lack of action and excitement in this play but side by side with the emotional passages go what a critic calls "sweet and sublime interludes." In addition to his tragedies he wrote masques for the Children of the Chapel and a series of comedies, most of which are unknown to the general reader even by their titles.

Thomas Middleton, (1570-1627) was a genuine contemporary of Shakespeare whose birth preceded that of Middleton by six years. His education was received in Gray's Inn, if we identify him with either the Thomas Middleton who was entered there in 1593 or the Middleton of a similar name who appears among the entrants of 1596. The two plays most closely associated with his name are—*The Changeling*, and *Women Beware Women.* Of these *The Changeling* is the most powerful of the collection of plays which bear his name; the plot is based upon a tale which is told in Reynolds' *Triumph of God's Revenge Against Murder.* Middleton succeeded in piling new horrors upon a frightful situation which needed no added thrills. His *Women Beware Women* borrows its plot partly from a novel of the day, *Hyppolito and Isabella*, partly from an historical episode involving Francesco de' Medici and Bianca Capello. Middleton produced also a series of comedies which form a marked contrast to his bloody tragedies. His pictures of London daily life should be studied side by side with those of Dekker; his knowledge of London was quite as extensive as that of his fellow dramatist but his treatment was more realistic, more drastic, lacking the genial idealistic touch of his colleague.

The two "tags" serving to identify Thomas Dekker to the modern student are *The Gull's Horn Book* and *The Shoemakers' Holiday. The Gull's Horn Book* though a pamphlet

rather than a play is of extreme interest to the student of drama because of the information which it gives regarding the theater of his day. *The Shoemakers' Holiday* is a mine of information concerning the English apprentice system of the early seventeenth century. Another play, *Old Fortunatus*, based on a German story, serves to keep his memory alive. His *Satiro-Mastix* was the "retort courteous" or discourteous to Ben Jonson's *Poetaster*. Dekker was one of the young dramatic blades of his day; he, like others of his craft, knew the look of a debtor's prison from the inside; Henslowe got him out once or twice by lending him enough to discharge his debts, but in 1613 he found no financial rescuer and his troubles began in earnest. How long he remained in jail is somewhat uncertain; we know that he was still there three years later and from his *Dreame*, written in 1620 where he refers poetically to the "Bed in which seven years I lay dreaming," it has been inferred that his sojourn in prison lasted for at least six years. Students of Elizabethan drama and especially that of the period of James I think lovingly of Thomas Dekker; as a dramatist we cannot place him in the first class but he had the mysterious gift of personality which makes his name even today a delightful memory.

The name of Ben Jonson (1573-1637) instantly suggests to the student of English Literature his two comedies *Everyman in his Humor* and *Every Man Out of His Humor*. Fortunately for the reader he defines in one of his plays his understanding of *humor*.

> "*As when some one peculiar quality*
> *Doth so possess a man, that it doth draw*
> *All his affects, his spirits, and his powers,*
> *In their confluctions all to run one way,*
> *This may truly said to be a Humor.*"

It will be noticed that this is a reversion to the old classical method of emphasizing one mental or spiritual quality in a character and subordinating the other elements. The Greeks

greatly surpassed Jonson in the employment of this method; Medea, Ulysses, Prometheus stand out vividly as living characters though the dramatist emphasizes but a single trait in each. Jonson's portraiture develops rather into types, reminding us forcibly of the abstractions of the old Moralities. A classicist by training and by profession he showed both the strength and the weakness of the school; he felt obliged to observe the Unities yet he admitted subplots, a thing the Greeks never tolerated; the best he can do in observing the Unity of Place in his *Volpone* was to put all the action into a single city, while permitting the separate scenes to pass in different parts of the same town; this is an essential departure from the Greek attitude toward place.

Jonson wrote two tragedies, *Sejanus* and *Catiline,* both of which were stage failures. If the student will read Ibsen's early play *Catiline* and compare it with Ben Jonson's tragedy of the same name he will see the difference between the work of a genius innocent of any knowledge of the Unities and a classical heavyweight who substitutes technique for dramatic élan. Ibsen as a mere stripling wrote a better *Catiline* than did Ben Jonson the great scholar of thirty-eight. As for Jonson and his friend Shakespeare, their comedies differed as widely as did the personality of the two poets. Jonson wrote comedies of manner, Shakespeare's genial plays are classed as romantic comedies; a comparison of *Volpone* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* will reveal the essential difference of the two styles. What would the reader give for a glimpse of the wit-combats of the two poets at the Mermaid tavern? Jonson, the Greek and Latin scholar, Shakespeare with his "small Latin and less Greek"; which of the two was more likely to win the verbal bout? Nobody has ever put it more graphically than Fuller in his *Worthies* written in 1662, only 46 years after Shakespeare's death, at a time when there were still living many men who had personally known him. Fuller thus describes the brilliant duelists: "Many were the wit-combats betwixt him and Ben Jonson, which two I behold like a Spanish great Galleon and an English Man of War;

Master Jonson (like the former) was built far higher in learning, solid, but slow in his performances. Shakespeare, with the English Man of War, lesser in bulk but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his Wit and Invention."

When we pass to Cyril Tourneur, (c. 1575–1626) no single title of his plays springs to the memory of the average student. Compilers of anthologies of Elizabethan drama rarely if ever include any of his work in their volumes. All the more surprising therefore is Swinburne's eulogy; "As a dramatic poet, the force of his genius is great enough to ensure him an enduring place among the foremost of the followers of Shakespeare." Experienced readers of Swinburne have learned to accept with caution the ecstatic flights in which he was wont to indulge when critically appraising literary men. The two plays of Tourneur mentioned in biographical sketches are *The Revenger's Tragedy* (printed in 1607) and *The Atheist's Tragedy* (printed in 1611.)

John Marston (c. 1575–1634) is so little known to the casual modern reader of Elizabethan drama that it is difficult to cite a single title which would be recognized by any except specialists. We know that he was a graduate of Oxford, A. B. 1594; it is thought that he studied law; it is certain that in middle life he entered the church. The fact that Marston had become a clergyman and his father-in-law was a royal chaplain gave Ben Jonson a chance for one of his quips; he is credited with the remark that "Marston wrote his father-in-law's preachings, and his father-in-law his sermons." His satires, "coarse and brutal" as one critic calls them, do not concern us here. If from the list of his tragedies we select a single title it will be *Sophonisba* (1606) because of its literary associations with its more famous Italian and French predecessors. His tragedies as a whole fall under the sanguinary tragedies-of-blood. His comedies are brisk and read well. *Eastward Hoe* (1605) written in collaboration with

Chapman and Jonson, a comedy of London life, may be read side by side with Dekker's plays on the same subject; this comedy landed Chapman and Marston in jail where Jonson voluntarily joined his two friends.

Of John Webster another writer of the period we know so little that cautious critics refuse to fix the date either of his birth or of his death. He seems to have been born about 1580; he may have died in 1625. Tradition gives him a London tailor as father; he appears from his writings to have had some training in the classics; even this alleged scholarship is questioned by those who think that he copied in his plays the classical references which he had heard his friend Heywood make in conversation. Two of his plays stand out, *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi;* one or both of these plays will be found in practically every anthology of Elizabethan drama. A third play, undoubtedly Webster's, *The Devil's Law-Case,* is scorned by modern critics: "clumsy, involved, inartistic" is the curt summing up of Mr. E. E. Kellett, the literary critic. These three constitute the complete list of plays which are unquestionably the work of Webster. To enter the maze of controversy regarding the plays in which he had a collaborating hand would lead to results of no special value to our study. If we must tag with a descriptive label the two genuine plays of Webster, tragedy-of-blood will do as well as any, though Mr. Kellett prefers a more special classification: "A fusion of the blood-tragedy with the Machiavellian type of which *Othello* is the supreme example."

"Lamentable dramatic technique" redeemed by "stupendous merits": a striking antithesis but each extreme seems true in its way. We feel ourselves in the presence of a somewhat awkward genius who rushes on like a giant piling horrors upon horrors until the sensitive auditor recoils. The modern reader is amazed at the Elizabethan thirst for stage gore. Americans are not as squeamish as the Greeks; we submit to tragedy as apparently inevitable in grand opera, but we have

a quaint way of expecting a happy ending to our plays. Any modern dramatist who should attempt the wholesale slaughter which the Elizabethan groundlings demanded would (in Boston, at least) be greeted by the Horatian protest—"Ohe! Jam satis!"

Philip Massinger, Walter Hampden, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* are the three associated names which will preserve, through the present generation at least, the name of Philip Massinger; aside from the play which Walter Hampden so bravely revived no titles of Massinger's dramas mean anything to the general reader. His dates, 1583-1640, remind us that we are getting far beyond the cardinal year 1603, which marks the passing of Queen Elizabeth and the accession of the Stuarts.

Massinger came of respectable lineage; his father was connected with the household of the Earl of Pembroke; the boy went to Oxford at the expense of the Earl. His father died in 1603; in 1606 a change in the succession of the title cut off the patronage and forced the young Oxford student to abandon hope of a degree.

In his plays a didactic trend is conspicuous; he formulated a moral problem and then worked it out by an ingeniously constructed plot. His characters lack complexity; they resemble movie heroines and villains, absolutely good or hopelessly bad with no contrasting qualities. As an example of a perfect villain unredeemed even by parental love, study his Sir Giles Overreach in *A New Way to Pay Old Debts.*

In Francis Beaumont (1584-1616) and John Fletcher (1579-1625) we have an almost unique example of collaboration unbroken until death. When Beaumont died in 1616, Fletcher joined forces with Massinger and others and occasionally produced an independent play. Both were genuine poets, each was in his peculiar way a master of dramatic technique. Modern critics find a pleasant task in analyzing a composite Beaumont-Fletcher play and assigning the various parts

to the individual authors. The sure-fire analytical methods of some of these scholars produce results so laughably unlike that the outcome of their work is to increase the wonder of the non-specialist at the skill shown by the two poets in fusing their individual gifts. Many are willing to admit the stage effectiveness of their plays and to recognize their lyric charm, but they criticize the character drawing as defective. *The Maid's Tragedy* and *Philaster* which are regarded as the best, will give the student a fair insight into the work of these aristocratic co-workers. Although Beaumont died as early as 1616 and Fletcher only nine years later, it is somewhat startling to find in these plays indications that the tide of Elizabethan drama had begun to ebb.

John Ford, born in 1586, in contrast to most of his dramatic colleagues was not obliged to write for a living. He matriculated at Oxford in 1601, but evidently remained there only one year, for in 1602 he was admitted to the Middle Temple.

Of his plays *The Broken Heart* acted about 1629, is one of the best known. *The Witch of Edmonton* produced about 1621 is equally familiar by name but Dekker and Rowley share the honors of composition. Passion is the keynote of Ford's plays, the conflict between impulse and restraint; it is in the presentation of this struggle in the soul of the characters that he grips his readers. Hazlitt regarded him as lacking in *vis comica* and as unduly extravagant in expression. We rarely find in his lines the charm of word or phrase which so distinguishes the best of his contemporaries; but here and there we come upon beautiful passages, now and then we are surprised by striking dramatic scenes which justify us in assigning to Ford a creditable position in the ranks of the dramatists of the period.

James Shirley (or Sherley) is called "the last of the Elizabethans," by a technical extension of the term Elizabethan to cover the period of English drama up to the first closing of

the theaters by the Puritans in 1642. His dates (1596-1666) coincide for twenty years with the life of Shakespeare so that, strictly speaking, they were "contemporaries" although in their dramatic work they are far enough apart.

Shirley was born in London and educated at the Merchant Taylor's School which has figured in the record of other dramatists mentioned in this chapter. From this school he passed to St. John's College, Oxford, and later to Cambridge, where he was awarded the B. A. degree about the year 1618. After his university course he settled in London; beginning his literary work in 1625 he wrote tragedies and comedies at the rate of about two each year. In his work he shows dramatic inventiveness, and skill in characterization. He had a fair sense of dramatic values and his plays maintain a uniformly high standard. For seventeen years he had been engaged in his dramatic work when the edict of the Puritans in 1642 put a sudden stop to all theatrical activites.

Chapter XXXVI

SHAKESPEARE

The student becomes so accustomed to hearing of the influence which Christopher Marlowe exerted over William Shakespeare that we are surprised when we discover not only that they were born in the same year, 1564, but that Marlowe died at the early age of twenty-nine, whereas Shakespeare lived to the mature age of fifty-two. How could a man born in the same year as Shakespeare and dying at the age of twenty-nine be said to shape in any way the work of the mighty Shakespeare? As a partial answer consider the plays which Shakespeare had composed up to that time. Marlowe's record is:—

Tamburlaine, Doctor Faustus, The Jew of Malta, Edward the Second, The Massacre of Paris, The Tragedy of Dido, Queen of Carthage.

In 1593 Shakespeare had completed what is usually called the "epoch of his early work"; this includes:—

Love's Labour's Lost, Two Gentlemen of Verona, Comedy of Errors, Romeo and Juliet, Henry VI, Richard III, Richard II, Titus Andronicus.

Note in this list the significant absence of his four great plays,—

Hamlet (1602), *Othello* (1604), *Macbeth* (1606), *King Lear* (1607).

If we compare what Marlowe had completed in 1593 with Shakespeare's record up to that time we cannot escape the conviction that Marlowe's dramatic development was

much more rapid than that of Shakespeare. In 1593 Shakespeare had produced nothing equal in dramatic strength to Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, *Doctor Faustus*, or *Jew of Malta*. We can only wonder, regret mingling with our query, what treasures Marlowe would have left had not that wretched brawl in a Deptford tavern cut short one of the most promising careers in the history of English literature.

There can be no reasonable doubt that the precocious Marlowe did influence his steadier and better balanced contemporary. When we read Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* we think constantly of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice;* Marlowe's chronicle history *Edward II* suggests by title at least Shakespeare's *Richard II* written at almost the very moment when Marlowe was writing his own *Edward II*, (1593). So much influence at least we must admit; but note the difference in the genius and the temperament of the two men; Marlowe was impetuous, vehement, unrestrained in expression; his envious contemporaries took the young giant's measure; Nash speaks of "Idiote artmasters, that intrude themselves to our eares as the alcumists of eloquence; who (mounted on the stage of arrogance) think to outbrave better pens with the swelling bumbast of a bragging blanke verse." Greene in a memorable passage speaks of Marlowe as "daring God out of heaven with that Atheist *Tamburlan*." Of this same play Ben Jonson said that it had nothing "but the scenical strutting and furious vociferation to warrant (it) to the ignorant gapers." Envious sneering; technically just, but failing to appreciate the terrific sweep of Marlowe's uncontrolled genius. We almost gasp as we watch his daring flights; he was the victim of his own audacity; he could dash off an *Edward II* but he could never have written a *Henry IV* for he lacked Shakespeare's sense of humor; he could take us to wild barbaric lands:

> "Where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine
> Threatening the world with high astounding terms"

but he could never have written those whispered words of Lear:

"Cordelia, Cordelia, stay a little."

Just there lies the difference between the two giants: Marlowe's talent ran away with him, Shakespeare had his genius under full control. Marlowe and Shakespeare handled at about the same time a similar theme in *The Jew of Malta* and *The Merchant of Venice*, yet note the difference in the method of treatment: Professor William Lyon Phelps sums it up in a single sentence: "Barabas is an impossible monster, Shylock is wonderfully human." A page of comparisons could add nothing to what Professor Phelps has said in nine words.

The young student is often perplexed over the positive assertions which he meets regarding the supposed influence exerted by writers upon one another; too often the bare statement is unaccompanied by citations in proof. He is told, for instance, that traces of the Irish dramatist Synge may be clearly seen in the plays of Eugene O'Neill. It would be far more convincing if the critic would attempt to prove his assertion by the quotation of alleged parallel passages from Synge's *Riders to the Sea* and O'Neill's sea plays. As a practical test of the supposed influence of Marlowe on Shakespeare we cite ten lines from Shakespeare's *Othello*, a play written in 1604, eleven years after the death of Marlowe. The words are spoken by Othello over the body of his wife Desdemona:

"O ill-starred wench!
Pale as thy smock! when we shall meet at compt,
This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven,
And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl!
Even like thy chastity:—
O cursed, cursed slave! Whip me, ye devils,
From the possession of this heavenly sight!
Blow me about in winds! roast me in sulphur!
Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!—
O Desdemon! dead, Desdemon! dead! O!"

Professor Phelps is right in saying that we can scarcely be mistaken in thinking we see in the first five lines the genuine disciplined genius of Shakespeare at its best; then as the wave of anguish mounts he bursts into five lines in the genuine Marlowe vein.

The remark attributed to Ben Jonson that Shakespeare had "small Latin and less Greek" has been so completely misunderstood by Americans that Shakespeare is frequently spoken of as a poet who by virtue of his genius triumphed over his imperfect education; he is frequently contrasted disadvantageously with his friend the "scholarly" Ben Jonson. Shakespeare was not a university man; Ben Jonson is supposed to have acquired his erudition at Cambridge University, but investigation fails to disclose any evidence that he ever spent a day at any university; he had a thorough training at the famous Westminster School, after which he was at once put to work as a bricklayer. It is true that two old and respectable authorities, Aubrey and Fuller, state that he went to Cambridge, but his name does not appear on the records of that university. The newer authorities acquiesce in the assertion that Jonson was not university trained; if this be true it follows that it was possible to acquire a deserved reputation for genuine classical scholarship by a course of instruction in an English secondary school, supplemented by private study. Westminster School was famous for its scholarship and Jonson doubtless took full advantage of his opportunities under the influence of his revered friend William Camden who was then second master and later became head of the school. Shakespeare's education was received at the Stratford grammar school, an institution much less illustrious than aristocratic Westminister. The American reader must not leap to the conclusion that the Stratford grammar school was of the same scholastic grade as an American grammar school,—intermediate between a primary and a high school. It can easily be proved that the course in Latin pursued at an English grammar school in the sixteenth century would put a Stratford upper form boy on a par with an American college senior who

had majored in Latin. We are well informed regarding the curriculum of English public schools of the sixteenth century; it is a reasonable assumption that the course at Stratford in Shakespeare's day corresponded to that of the schools in other parts of England. Here is a list of the Latin authors studied by the boys in these schools: Vergil, Cicero, Plautus, Horace, Ovid, Terence, Seneca; to these was occasionally added Persius; in some schools the *Eclogues* of the renaissance poet Baptista Mantuanus were substituted for those of Vergil; that such a substitution was made at Stratford is attested by the dactylic hexameter which in *Love's Labour's Lost* (IV. 2. 89-90) the schoolmaster Holofernes quotes:—

> *"Fauste, precor, gelida quando pecus omne sub umbra*
> *Ruminat!"*

This line seems so thoroughly Vergilian that much time has been spent by classical students in searching for it in Vergil's *Eclogues*. It would be easy to prove by quotations that Shakepeare had read many of the Latin authors mentioned in our list. That he knew Seneca is evident in many passages; to his tragedies he makes a specific reference in Hamlet: (II.2.395-396); that he was acquainted with Plautus is shown by the fact that his *Comedy of Errors* is a working over of the plot of the *Menaechmi;* as for Ovid it would be possible to fill half a page with indubitable evidence of his borrowings; in his earliest play *Love's Labour's Lost* (IV.2.127), he mentions Ovid and puns on his name *Naso: Ovidius Naso was the man; and why indeed, Naso, but for smelling out the odoriferous flowers of fancy, the jerks of invention*"?

It is known that English translations of the Latin classical writers were becoming common from about 1580 on, and it might be argued that all the quotations in Shakespeare were taken from these versions; some of them were undoubtedly so derived; the diction of many of Shakespeare's citations from Ovid prove clearly that he took the passages from Arthur Golding's translation of the *Metamorphoses*, but it can be shown that in other passages from that author he used

words so markedly different from the version of Golding that he must have gone directly to the original; the fact that he actually quotes the exact words of Mantuanus attests first-hand familiarity with Latin.

As we are interested only in showing that Shakespeare's "small Latin" was really "large Latin" from the American standpoint we shall here rest our case; the interested reader will find material for further study in Lee's *Life of Shakespeare* and Neilson & Thorndike's *The Facts About Shakespeare.*

Elementary Greek was occasionally taught in Elizabethan grammar schools to a few pupils of unusual ability, but there is no satisfactory evidence that Shakespeare ever studied that language. That he had a fairly good knowledge of French is shown by the diction of the original passages in that language in *Henry V.*, where the language is admittedly grammatically accurate, though the fastidious French ear may detect some flaws in idiom. Of Italian it is reasonably certain that he possessed a knowledge sufficient at least to enable him to pick out from poems or novels in that language material enough for an essentially new creation.

There is nothing improbable in the statement first printed in Cibber's *Lives of the Poets* (1753) to the effect that when Shakespeare went up to London from Stratford he found his first employment in looking after the horses of the gentlemen who rode out to the plays. There were, at the time, only two or at the most three theaters in London; though ranking as London theaters the builders had been forced through the opposition of the lord mayor and the city council to erect their structures beyond the walls of the city; the two theaters were in the fields outside Bishopsgate.

While attending the performance the well-to-do patrons who had ridden out were compelled to leave their horses in charge of attendants. The story runs that the young Stratford lad went into this work and showed thus early his shrewd business sense by organizing and placing himself at

the head of a company known as "the horse-tending service of Shakespeare's boys." He soon transferred his activities from the fields outside the theater to the interior of the playhouse; we are not informed of the exact nature of his new duties; the accounts are vague; we are told that he entered as a "servitor," that his first work was as a "prompter's attendant," probably "call-boy"; in any case it was a humble position: "he was received into the company then in being at first in a very mean rank" says an old writer, but his advance to a place on the stage was rapid. His work as a dramatist so completely outshines his reputation as an actor that we are inclined to overlook or even to ignore this phase of his professional career; it is however a fact that he continued his stage work until a late period of his life.

James Burbage's *Theater*, built in 1576, continued on its original site for more than twenty years; in this theater Shakespeare acted and there many of his plays were performed. When, in 1599, a new theater, *The Globe*, was erected on the south bank of the Thames out of the timbers of the old *Theater*, the two sons of James,—Cuthbert and Richard, divided one half of the shares in the *Globe;* the other half was divided among five of the principal actors, one of whom was Shakespeare. In 1603 the new Stuart King, James I, arrived in London; one of his first official acts was to license the Lord Chamberlain's men as the "King's Servants" to act as a company; in the patent he mentions nine shareholders, among whom we again note the name of Shakepeare. The last we hear of him on the stage was in 1603 when his name occurs as an actor in Ben Jonson's *Sejanus;* Thorndike doubts whether he appeared after that date but doubtless he continued to receive dividends as a shareholder in the Lord Chamberlain-King's Company.

It is difficult to rate accurately Shakespeare's ability as an actor; if we may judge by the rôles which he took in his own plays and those of Ben Jonson, he did not consider himself and was not regarded by Jonson as qualified to take the leading parts; at any rate our scanty records indicate that

he played the minor character of the *Ghost* in his own *Hamlet*, *Old Adam* in his *As You Like It*, and the elder *Knowell* in Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humor*. In the folio edition of Jonson's play, which was on the stage in 1598, Shakespeare's name heads the list of the cast of ten.

If an admirer of Shakespeare as an actor and practical theater man as well as a great writer, will, after reading Hamlet's advice to the players, examine carefully the numerous annotations in the ordinary school edition of *Hamlet*, he will be surprised at the failure of many commentators to appreciate the real significance of the address. Here was an experienced theater man writing a play in which from his standpoint as a professional actor in a first class company he puts into Hamlet's mouth some of the suggestions on acting which he would personally have offered had he, like Lope de Vega and scores of other dramatists, put into a critical treatise his thoughts on the theory of acting. Not a hint of this purpose do we get in the erudite notes of many of the school editions; Shakespeare is in these books handled exclusively from the literary standpoint. It was Joe Jefferson who said: "You may have all the good literature you wish in a play, if it does not interfere with the play's action." That Shakespeare did masterly work from the literary standpoint goes without saying, but many commentators have made the literature "interfere with the action." Nearly every line of Hamlet's advice invites comment; it is one of the most sensible practical treatises on the art of acting ever written. Consider a few of these admonitions:

> "Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue."

It has taken 300 years to see the point; the old style of ponderous stage delivery of Shakespeare in which every word weighed a pound has in these enlightened days been replaced by a quicker and more natural enunciation.

> "Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand."

In this warning again, we have but recently come to a realization of the wisdom of Shakespeare's advice; today we have actors who can control their hands; we have stage waiters who wait, we have old men who sit quietly in the light of their study lamp.

> "In the whirlwind of passion you must acquire and beget a temper that may give it smoothness."

Here he raises the old question of the function of emotion in acting; shall we act from the heart or from the head or from both? Irving said: "from the heart"; Coquelin said "from the head"; Joe Jefferson said "From both! Keep the heart warm, the head cool." Mr. Jefferson knew his Shakespeare.

> "The purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold as't were, the mirror up to nature."

In these words we have an allusion to the problem which has aroused so many controversies: "What is the purpose of drama?" Is drama, as a Roman writer said, a *speculum vitae?* A reflection of life? The essence of life? A slice of life? A criticism of life? Here is controverted material enough for a doctor's dissertation.

And then this practical theater man has a suggestion for the untrained actors who though they

> "make the unskilful laugh cannot but make the judicious grieve."

We see these "robustious" artists now and then even today; their "strutting" and "bellowing" give us a hint of actors whom Shakespeare must have met in his day and heartily abominated. Inferentially his own acting must have been quiet and restrained.

In the closing lines he gently pricks those incorrigible nuisances, the funny men who by interpolating "gags" throw the whole company out of their cues:

> "Let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them."

Within a decade a New York company which for a year had smoothly acted their parts suddenly "blew up" in a Boston Theater and forced the manager to lower the curtain; the leading *comédienne* had yielded to an uncontrollable impulse to "let go"; she convulsed the house but she broke up the performance. Those of our readers who are familiar with the mysterious region behind the curtain may have noticed printed warnings to the effect that any actor interpolating lines in his rôle will be fined. Only a practical stage man can appreciate the nervous tension of the actor awaiting his cue; deprive a company of their entrance signals and you throw the whole machinery out of gear.

These running comments on the advice of Hamlet to the players are merely suggestive of the opportunity awaiting the teacher of Shakespeare who presents him as one of the world's greatest practical playwrights who in constructing his dramas was primarily concerned with the immediate effect upon his audience, and gave no thought to future readers of a printed text.

A scholar who knew his Shakespeare by heart was heard to say that no one should take up the study of that author before the age of thirty. A strange assertion, but it deserves consideration. Children and even college students too often grow calloused under the glowing epithets showered upon the bard by their enthusiastic teachers; they become tired and bored, because too often there is in their undisciplined minds, their constricted outlook, their undeveloped spiritual natures, no genuine response. It is both amusing and sobering to hear high school boys and girls talking about "doing their Shakespeare"; many of them "do" him so thoroughly before they are twenty that they rarely go back to him after leaving college. The truth is that they haven't "done" Shakepeare until Shakespeare has "done" *them.* There comes a time when with growing maturity the revelation of his greatness bursts upon the mind and soul. It sometimes comes without warning, as it did to the poet Goethe. Only the initiated can understand his ecstatic outburst; to those who are still

"doing" Shakespeare his words sound like the utterances of a man gone mad: "The first page of his that I read made me his for life; and when I had finished the first play, I stood like one born blind, upon whom a miraculous hand bestows sight in a moment. I saw, I felt, in the most vivid manner, that my existence was infinitely expanded, everything was new and strange to me, and the unwonted light pained my eyes." Goethe had seen the vision splendid. In the light of a revelation such as this, literary things take on a new perspective. Critics have searched for the poet who ranks next to the master. Who is he? The classical Ben Jonson? The aristocratic Beaumont and Fletcher? Whoever the fortunate man is we must call him "next" but as an old Latin writer said of another "second rater," he is *proximus, sed proximus longo intervallo.*

The German universities require the literary candidate for the *Doctorate* to select an author and to saturate himself with the spirit, the diction, the inner and outer life of that author. Using him as a nucleus the student catches the spirit of his favorite writer, around him he groups the relevant facts gathered from his study. We knew a candidate who specialized in Dr. Samuel Johnson; he made a trip to England for the sole purpose of following in Johnson's footsteps, from his infancy to his death; he visited the towns in which the critic lived; he haunted the still remaining taverns which the testy old scholar had frequented. It was a delight to hear this specialist talk of the old London of Johnson's day. Another, a theological professor, made a special study of Martin Luther; he visited every place where the leader of the Reformation had lived; to him Luther was no longer a mere name, he was a spiritual comrade. Greek scholars sometimes choose Aristophanes for his knowledge of Athenian manners and customs; Latin students take to Horace as a genial guide to Roman life. It has been said that a detailed study of Molière's plays will impart a mastery of the period of Louis XIV.

What will the scholar gain if he takes Shakespeare as his

literary companion? He will not learn as many concrete facts about London daily life as Dekker would give him; not so much about the Puritans as he could get from Milton; not very much specifically regarding topics of the day, if we believe the critics; we may grant all this with something akin to satisfaction. The dramatist of "current issues" lives his little day and is relegated to the literary shelf. Ibsen made much of such themes but within a few decades after his death John Millington Synge condemned him because "he did not discuss current issues." Therein lies a warning for the dramatist; "timely topics" soon become of historical interest only. Ibsen boasted that he was always ten years ahead of the society of his time; he is thirty years behind the thinkers of today. The critics tell us not to expect to find in Shakespeare a discussion of controversial subjects. When, however, they assure us that with noble reticence he says little about himself in his plays we must accept the assertion more cautiously. Granted that his plays are not as biographical as those of Ibsen, we cannot study his works as a whole without forming from our reading certain definite conclusions regarding his personality. Put side by side the plays of Ibsen and of Shakespeare and compare the impressions received from an examination of their work. Ibsen, the economical, utilizing every scrap of his dramatic material; a minor personality, a subordinate idea, in one of his plays becomes a major character, a main theme in another. The Selma of the *League of Youth* becomes the Nora of *Doll's House;* the inherited malady of Dr. Rank in *Doll's House* develops into the sole theme of *Ghosts*.

Ibsen the economical, Shakespeare the opulent; Ibsen the parochial, Shakespeare the universal. Ibsen wrote largely of Norwegian social problems, Shakespeare though glowingly English in his tributes to his fatherland, portrays in his *Lear, Othello, Macbeth, Hamlet,* the universal man. In reading Shakespeare we get the impression of a broad, kindly, tolerant nature, keenly observant of what was going on about him, refusing to become enmeshed in the literary and the-

atrical squabbles of the day, smiling quietly at the foibles of society, glancing at them occasionally in his plays,—a man we should dearly love to know.

A group of university seniors was recently asked to name six books which they would select if for any reason their choice were thus absolutely restricted. In the submitted lists the name of Shakespeare was found with scarcely an exception. These students were all under the age of thirty; their choice was evidence of their aesthetic taste, a tribute incidentally to the teachers who had made Shakespeare live.

If these undergraduates continue the literary friendship they formed in college, they will find that the "myriad minded" poet has preceded them in all the experiences of life, the joys, the sorrows, the failures, the successes. At a critical moment the lover of Shakespeare will recall a quip, a jest, an admonition, an encouragement, that will make the joy more radiant, the sadness less despairing.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE ELIZABETHAN STAGE

THE reconstruction of an Elizabethan stage presents difficulties which are not encountered in the restoration of the stages of the ancient Greek and Roman theaters. We have extensive ruins of ancient theaters both Greek and Roman; from these remains it is possible to restore with a fair degree of accuracy the theaters as they actually appeared to the ancients. From a fossil bone or two an expert zoölogist can draw a sketch of the entire animal. Could we find the foundations of a ruined Elizabethan theater the architects might do for us what Dörpfeld has done for the Dionysiac theater at Athens. So far as we know not a single stone or timber has survived; how then can we ascertain with any degree of certainty the structure of an Elizabethan stage? The evidence for this reconstruction is more reliable than might be supposed; at least four sources of information are open to us.

1. Pictures of Elizabethan stages.
2. Definite information regarding the appearance of the stage after the reopening of the theaters at the restoration of the monarchy in 1660.
3. Henslowe's Diary and extant contracts for building certain Elizabethan playhouses.
4. References in Elizabethan plays.

What do we mean by an Elizabethan stage? Although Elizabeth died in 1603 critics speak of the Elizabethan stage as continuing until 1642, 1648, or as late as the Restoration in 1660. The explanation is that long after the death of Elizabeth, as late in fact as 1642 or 1648, methods of theater construction continued identical with those that had been in

vogue at her death in 1603. With the return of Charles II from France and the reopening of the playhouses in 1660 a new theatrical epoch began. Charles and his courtiers brought back with them some radical ideas; the French theaters had made a much greater advance in structure and scenery than

THE FORTUNE PLAYHOUSE, GOLDEN LANE, ERECTED 1622.
From a view taken in 1811.

the Elizabethan stage of the same period had attained. At the reopening we might fairly anticipate the adoption of new principles on the English stage; but we must not forget that the theaters which began the new era in London in 1660 were essentially the buildings which only a dozen years previously had been dismantled, and stripped of stage accessories, leaving only the walls intact. It would be unreasonable to

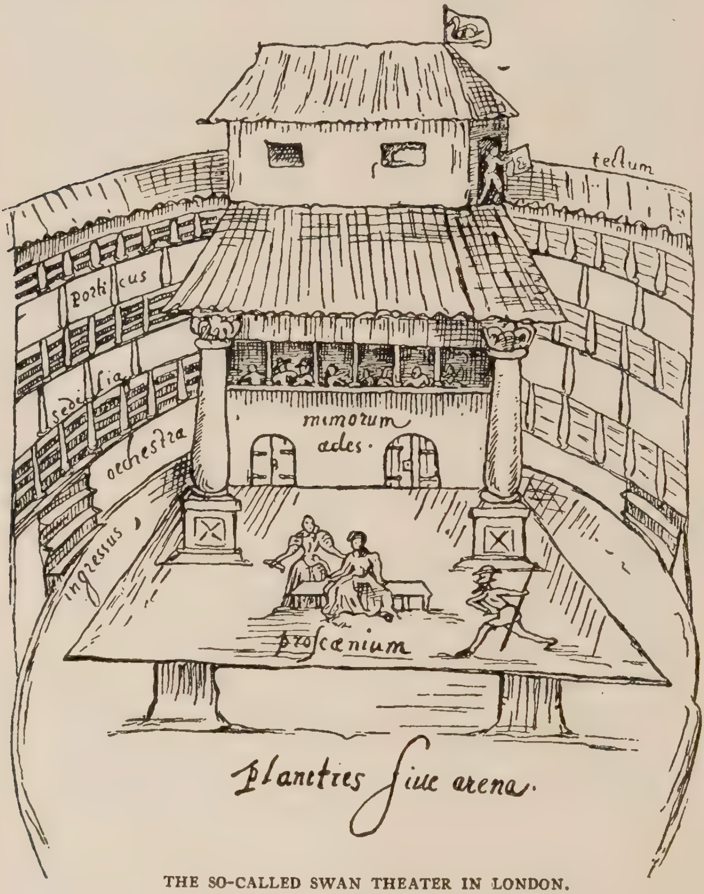
look for an entirely new type of English theater after a cessation of only 12 years. When the theaters resumed they preserved many of the essential features of the Elizabethan period; to these would be added certain novelties that the English monarch and his courtiers had brought back from France. From our definite knowledge of these post-restoration English theaters, supported and corroborated by the knowledge gleaned from other sources, we are warranted in assuming that the pre-restoration English theater contained certain of the features that we find in the post-restoration structure.

Some Elizabethan theatrical contracts which have come down to us give exact and authentic information regarding the dimensions and the shape of certain theaters. Our fourth source is a minute examination of the Elizabethan plays themselves,—a fascinating and really rewarding study; from these plays even without our supplementary sources we can go far toward acquiring an accurate idea of Elizabethan stage conditions. A standard book on this subject is Victor E. Albright's "The Shaksperian Stage" published by the Columbia University Press in 1912. Written as a Ph. D. dissertation at Columbia University it combines in an unusual degree genuine scholarship and absolute clarity.

We take up in order our evidence for the reconstruction of the Elizabethan stage. First, the pictures. These are four in number; they are known as the Swan, the Red Bull, the Roxana and the Messalina. They have all, at various times, been regarded as authentic views of an Elizabethan Stage. The fact is that only one of them,—The Messalina, can be regarded as a thoroughly reliable source for the reconstruction of an Elizabethan public theater. The Swan is a picture drawn by a Hollander, Arend Van Buchell, from a description written to him from London by his friend Johannes de Witt. A person who attempts to sketch a building he has never seen, will almost inevitably mingle blunders with facts, even though he has before him as a guide an accurately written description. Van Buchell's reproduction is partly correct

and partly wrong; it is of but subordinate value to one who seeks absolute accuracy in his study of the Elizabethan Stage.

The so-called Red Bull cannot possibly be a picture of the Elizabethan Red Bull theater for the simple reason that



THE SO-CALLED SWAN THEATER IN LONDON.

From a drawing by J. de Witt, 1596 A.D., in the Library of the University in Utrecht, Holland.

it represents an auditorium lighted by candles and footlights whereas the Red Bull, like most Elizabethan theaters, was open to the sky and the performances took place only in daylight hours.

The third picture, the Roxana, is so called because it is printed on the title page of a play called *The Tragedy of Roxana.* It was printed in 1632 and thus falls within what we have called the Elizabethan period. Only a small portion of the stage is represented, but what little we see of it may

THE SO-CALLED RED BULL THEATER IN LONDON.
From a picture of the year 1662.

be accepted as valuable evidence. Unfortunately for our present purpose there is indubitable proof that the play which it adorns was brought out at Cambridge University and not on the stage of one of the public theaters; the very fact that the play is written in Latin is sufficient evidence in support of the assertion that it was a university play.

Last on our list we have the so-called Messalina picture. This like the Roxana, forms part of the title page of a

play, *The Tragedy of Messalina.* The date of the book is 1640; the author was Nathanael Richards. This drama, written in English, falls within our period, and bears distinct evidence of having been designed for a public theater. We may accept the picture, cut off though it is on the sides, as an authentic though incomplete evidence of the appearance of a

FRONTISPIECE TO THE TRAGEDY OF ROXANA.

genuine Elizabethan public stage. Noting the remarkable similarity between the Roxana picture of 1632 and the Messalina of 1640 we may fairly conclude that the two, one for a university stage, the other for a public theater, enable us to reconstruct with approximate exactness the stage of the Elizabethan period.

We have spoken of extant contracts of the period as giving us authentic material. Albright cites the specifications

for the construction of the first Fortune Theatre, 1601, two years before the death of Elizabeth; there are given the exact dimensions of the house, its shape, the number of stories, the width of the galleries, the dimensions of the stage and a provision that "the said Stage shall be in all other pro-

FRONTISPIECE TO THE TRAGEDY OF MESSALINA.

portions contrived and fashioned like unto the Stage of the said play house called the Globe" (1599).

The known shape of the London theaters after the Restoration affords us valuable hints of the appearance of the pre-Restoration stage, even though we allow for the adoption in the Restoration theaters of the imported French elements; a cut of the Duke's Theater, 1673, corroborates in many essentials the features noted in the Roxana and the Messalina pictures.

Finally, we come to the evidence presented by the Elizabethan dramas themselves. Modern historians are recognizing more fully than did their predecessors the value of old plays as sources of historical information; from a careful reading of Dekker's *The Shoemakers' Holiday* we may gain a vivid idea of the daily life of the Londoners of the early seventeenth century. Old plays, whether early English or early American, amply repay the study of the investigator. Dr. Albright has read with a keenly observant eye a large number of Elizabethan dramas; by tabulating and comparing the results of his investigation he has accumulated a mass of material which in part corroborates, in part supplements, the conclusions drawn from the other sources.

Using as a basis all his material independently of the plays Dr. Albright describes as follows the probable appearance of the Elizabethan Stage in Shakespeare's day: "An outer stage, 20 to 30 feet deep, and 20 to 25 feet wide at the curtain; a proscenium door at either side of the stage with a balcony window above it; an inner stage at the rear 10 to 12 feet deep, 20 to 25 feet wide and 12 feet high, with a gallery of the same length and breadth just over it, and a curtain 20 to 25 feet by 12 feet playing between the outer and inner stage, and discovering and closing the latter." Reducing this description to the simplest terms we may say that the essentials of an Elizabethan stage as defined by Albright are: an outer stage, an inner stage, a curtain separating the two stages, two proscenium doors, two balcony windows, and a gallery. Of these the most essential are an outer and an inner stage separated by a curtain. The two proscenium doors furnished access to the stage; the balcony windows could be used in serenades; the gallery might be utilized as the walls of a beleaguered city. In many plays we could dispense with the balcony windows and the gallery but we must have at least the outer and the inner stage, and proscenium doors for entrances and exits.

Our first impression of such a stage is its apparent meagerness as compared with our elaborate modern stages: no drop

curtain, no artificial lighting, no scenery. A careful study of this apparently scanty equipment will entirely change our impression regarding a Shakespearean performance; in the first place, although no scenery was employed, properties were used; these properties were almost invariably placed on the inner stage; when the curtain was in place between the outer and the inner stage the action took place on the outer stage before the curtain; while this action was in progress the stage hands were setting the properties on the inner stage behind the curtain,—a banquet hall, a court of law, a room in a palace. When everything was set the curtain was withdrawn and the action took place on the entire stage, outer and inner, with the furniture or other properties on the inner stage. If a change was needed the curtain was closed and the change made after the action had been resumed on the outer stage before the curtain.

The alternation of outer and inner stages in Elizabethan performances is exemplified every day in modern vaudeville houses, where a song and dance may take place in front of a curtain while the stage hands are setting up a trapeze or the properties for a one-act skit.

The absence of scenery was not as disturbing as we might suppose; the imagination supplied the lack of painted canvas. It is a striking fact that a modern tendency in some of the leading European theaters is toward a return to the simplicity of the Elizabethan stage, substituting screens and curtains for elaborate painted scenery. The modern movement is actuated by a desire to return to the Elizabethan method of concentrating attention on the actor without a distraction and dissipation of the interest by elaborate scenery.

If we add the balcony windows for serenades or points of vantage for observing the action on the lower stage, and utilize the gallery for war scenes as well as for other purposes we discover that Shakespeare had at his disposal a flexible mechanism fully adequate for the presentation of his plays. One great advantage of his stage was the possibility of presenting a play with no pauses during an entire act; an ex-

amination of an Elizabethan play will indicate clearly that by the use of the outer and the inner stage, balcony windows and galleries, the performance could go on uninterruptedly until the close of an act. Some critics go even further and claim that there was no need of pausing even between the acts; these scholars point to the uninterrupted action of a Greek play and they assert that an Elizabethan play likewise was performed without a scene or act pause from beginning to end.

We note the absence of a front curtain in the Elizabethan theater, precisely as in the ancient Greek theater. In both the action began by the entrance of one or more characters before the eyes of the audience; in both the play ended by the withdrawal of the actors either in a body or one by one until the stage was empty. The printed texts of all Shakespearean plays end with the stage direction *Exit* or *Exeunt.* When we note how rarely a modern play begins with an empty stage and how infrequently the final curtain falls on a stage devoid of actors, we gain a vivid idea of one important difference between an Elizabethan and a modern performance.

The reader who desires to carry further his study of an Elizabethan performance will find it profitable to analyze a play or two and assign the various scenes to the appropriate part of the stage. As a specimen we subjoin an analysis of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* as submitted by a college class of advanced students.

Act I, Scene	1.	Venice, a Street, Outer stage.
	2.	Room in Portia's House, Inner stage.
	3.	Venice, a Public Place, Outer.
Act II, Scene	1.	Belmont, Room in Portia's House, Inner.
	2.	Venice, a Street, Outer.
	3.	Venice, Room in Shylock's House, Inner.
	4.	Venice, a Street, Outer.
	5.	Venice, Before Shylock's House, Outer.
	6.	Venice, Before Shylock's House, Outer.
	7.	Belmont, Room in Portia's House, Inner.
	8.	Venice, a Street, Outer.
	9.	Belmont, Room in Portia's House, Inner.

Act III, Scene	1.	Venice, a Street, Outer.
	2.	Belmont, Room in Portia's House, Inner.
	3.	Venice, a Street, Outer.
	4.	Belmont, Room in Portia's House, Inner.
	5.	Belmont, a Garden, Outer.
Act IV, Scene	1.	Venice, a Court of Justice, Inner.
	2.	Venice, a Street, Outer.
Act V		Belmont, Avenue to Portia's House. Full Stage (Inner and Outer).

Although Albright's explanation of the employment of the inner and the outer stage has undoubtedly for the first time made clear to the non-technical reader the general method of presentation of an Elizabethan stage, it should be stated that there are some marked differences of opinion regarding the detailed use of the stage in that period. Two extreme views, sharply contrasted, are held by modern scholars. They all admit the existence of an inner and an outer stage, but they differ regarding the method of employing these stages. One group places both the action and the properties almost entirely on the outer stage. They claim that the Elizabethans did not object to incongruity of scenery; if the stage represented a forest, the outer stage was decorated with property trees; an instant later, without any feeling of incongruity, the audience could imagine themselves in a palace room although the stage trees remained unchanged; if there were placed side by side on the stage two utterly inconsistent properties such as a bed and a courtroom, the audience would have no trouble in fixing its attention solely upon the particular property needed at the moment. At the other extreme are those who try to discover the exact intention of the playwright. These scholars believe that every time Shakespeare and his colleagues made a change of scene they mentally decided on the exact part of the stage where the action should take place, —the outer, the inner, the balconies, or the galleries.

Professor Thorndike in his *Shakespeare's Theater* adopts a mean between the extremes. He cannot believe that Shakespeare so completely neglected the possibilities of the

inner stage as to allow a stage tree to appear on the outer stage in the middle of a palace room; the dramatist would, Professor Thorndike thinks, surely have put the forest trees on the inner stage and at the change of scene he would have closed the curtain, thus transferring the room scene to the outer stage. On the other hand, says he, we ought not to attribute to the Elizabethan playwright the deliberate mental assignment of each particular scene to a definite part of the stage. It is safer to assume that in very many instances the Elizabethan writers did not definitely localize their scenes; that they left to the producer or the stage manager the task of deciding on what part of the stage he would localize each particular scene.

Chapter XXXVIII

CHANGE OF NATIONAL ATTITUDE TOWARD THE THEATER AND ITS RESULTS

We can trace the opposition to the theater far back of the accession of Charles I; even in the sixteenth century, during the reign of Elizabeth, the London authorities were bitterly opposed to players and playhouses alike. Nor was this spirit of opposition entirely confined to the Puritans; the objections of the non-Puritan element were largely economic and social: the interference with traffic caused by the concentration of crowds at the theaters; the incentive to riotous conduct through the gathering of apprentices and other disorderly elements; the danger of spreading the contagion in times of pestilence. A curious pamphlet, the work of an Anglican divine, asserted that the ever-recurring plagues were the punishment of heaven for the immorality of the current plays. When theological and sociological arguments were exhausted the aesthetic Londoners declared that it shocked the feelings of the refined to see an actor attired in woman's dress. By unmistakable signs heaven continued to declare its wrath against the playhouse; in 1580 London was shaken by an earthquake; at a Sunday performance the wooden seats collapsed, causing the death or injury of several Londoners; a serious riot outside of one of the theaters aroused the bitter resentment of the orderly citizens; these events coupled with the ever-threatening plague furnished ammunition to those who were demanding the abolition of the theater as an institution.

Our common knowledge of the repressive action of the Puritans during the Commonwealth should not tempt us to the hasty conclusion that the opposition to the theater in the

sixteenth century was entirely confined to that party. The enemies of the playhouse during Shakespeare's lifetime included clergymen of the established church, Puritan preachers, politicians and pamphleteers; even an ardent admirer of the stage will in fairness admit that the extant plays of the generation preceding the closing of the theaters in 1642 furnish powerful arguments in justification of the indignation of the foes of the theater.

By the time Charles came to the throne the hostility had become so politically organized that the Cavalier supporters of the theater recognized the serious conflict confronting them. An aroused House of Commons faced a pleasure loving court; in the first year of the reign of Charles we find an expressed determination by the Puritans to have a hand in the regulation of theatrical performances and the construction of playhouses. Confronted by this formidable coalition, Anglican as well as Puritan, we may well ask how the theater managed not only to survive but actually to flourish. One reason may be found in the hosts of Englishmen who loved the playhouse so dearly that no clerical admonitions regarding the wrath of heaven, no medical warnings concerning unhygienic conditions attendant upon a crowd appealed to them in the slightest degree.

A powerful ally of the theater in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was the royal patronage. For a hundred years there was a conflict between the court and the municipal authorities of London; the city fathers could prevent the building of a playhouse within the city limits, but they could not hinder James Burbage from erecting his theater just outside the walls. They might fulminate against actors as a class, but they could not lay hands upon the companies licensed by the crown and the nobles.

The actors were quick to take advantage of their position; keenly conscious of the contempt in which they were held by their enemies they, in turn, began to taunt their foes. Beginning as a moral and medical feud the war ultimately assumed a political aspect, for as protéges of the king the actors and

playwrights were popularly regarded as partisans of the court and the nobility. As the political rancor increased between the throne and the commons, actors and playwrights were forced to share the vicissitude of their supporters; when Charles I passed from the stage he was followed into temporary oblivion by the actors and playwrights who had thriven under his protection.

When Charles I came to the throne in 1625 the Puritan spirit of opposition had become threatening; in the first year of Charles' reign we find the enactment of a law forbidding "the acting of interludes and common plays on Sunday." In the next year, 1626, a petition for the erection of an amphitheater in Lincoln's Inn Fields met with a refusal because the submitted plan proposed to offer theatrical entertainments in the new building. A further proof of the increasingly hostile spirit was shown by an edict forbidding Nathaniel Giles to continue his long established business of supplying to the public stage boys who were members of the royal chapel choir. We get glimpses now and then of the growing determination of the Puritans to abolish if possible all stage plays; in 1631 the inhabitants of the Blackfriars district drew up a petition to the bishop of London insisting upon the demolition of the theater which was standing there. They based their demand upon an ancient law forbidding a playhouse within the limits of the city of London; they presented the stock arguments against the theater: the obstruction of traffic, of business, and the interference with divine worship.

Two famous attacks on the English stage of the seventeenth century were William Prynne's *Histrio-Mastix*, 1633, and Jeremy Collier's *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage*, 1698. Collier's attack, though far more eventful than that of his predecessor, came after the restoration and lies without the scope of this volume.

William Prynne, (1600-1669), was an Oxford graduate and a member of the London bar. His *Histrio-Mastix* ("scourge of actors") was a fierce attack upon the stage and was written from the Puritan standpoint. In this screed he

greatly offended the court by emphasizing the violent end which, he claimed, had befallen the monarchs who had fostered the drama; his vitriolic attack on actresses as a class was especially obnoxious because at that moment Queen Henrietta Maria was participating in a ballet which was in rehearsal and by implication Prynne's slurs applied to her personally. The drastic punishment which was meted out to him was in part the outcome of his *Histrio-Mastix* but it was also instigated by his previous attacks on the ritual and the accepted theological doctrines of the established church.

In 1642 an ordinance of both houses of Parliament commanded that "while these sad causes and set times of humiliation do continue public stage-plays shall cease and be forborne." These "sad causes" were, of course, the growing clash between the English court and the Puritans.

By 1648 Oliver Cromwell and his party were in the undoubted ascendancy, and the Puritan parliament was strong enough to take extreme measures. The Puritans were enraged over numerous violations of the edict of 1642; more than once, especially in 1647, and in the spring of 1648, squads of soldiers forced their way into the public theaters and broke up the performance by arresting the actors.

There can be no doubt about the temper of Parliament in February, 1648, when it passed the final ordinance. Certain officials of London and Westminster,—the Lord Mayor, Justices of the Peace, Sheriffs—were "authorized and required to pull down and demolish, or cause or procure to be pulled down and demolished, all stage galleries, seats and boxes, erected or used, or which shall be erected and used for the acting or playing, or being acted or played, such stage plays."

This drastic order was strictly executed. Probably nothing but the bare walls of the theaters were left standing. The walls at least were left, for we know that three of these dismantled theaters,—the Red Bull, the Cockpit and Salisbury Court were refitted and reopened at the Restoration in 1660. From the facts as here presented we can see that the Parliamentary enactment of 1648 really marked the final official

closing of the theaters during the Protectorate. Fleay [1] while recording the events of 1648 evidently regards 1642 as the more important date: "for the dramatic student the end of this first and great period of our stage history dates in August 1642."

In concluding the historical treatment of the first period of our *Story of the Drama* we give five cardinal dates which mark the closing events of the era:

1603	Death of Elizabeth.
1642	First Ordinance for the closing of the theaters.
1648	Final Ordinance for the closing of the theaters.
1649–1660	Commonwealth and Protectorate.
1660	Restoration of the monarchy and reopening of the theaters.

[1] History of the London Stage, Frederick G. Fleay, London, 1890.

UNIVERSAL ELEMENTS OF DRAMA

XXXIX. THE UNIVERSAL AND NATIONAL ELEMENTS IN DRAMA
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Chapter XXXIX

THE UNIVERSAL AND NATIONAL ELEMENTS IN DRAMA

A few years ago Gorki's *Lower Depths* was produced in Boston. The actors spoke in their native tongue; with the exception of a small group of Russians in the gallery there were not a dozen persons in the audience who understood a single word of the entire performance. Yet from beginning to end the play held the audience spellbound. What was there in this play that riveted attention? It represented a squalid scene in a Russian cellar. Practically no plot, scarcely any discernible connection between the incidents, very little action of an exciting nature, simply the doings of a set of unsavory, unkempt men and women crowded into a dirty lodging house. Foreigners, but human beings. Herein lies the germ of the universal and the national element in drama. The audience soon discovered that these far-away Russians were actuated by the same human motives as those of the most exclusive Bostonians in the theater; they loved, they hated, they suffered, they died; they did what men and women are doing and have done everywhere in the world since the creation. That is the universal element in drama. The national note was equally distinguishable; the setting was emphatically Russian. The great stove, the samovar, the Russian money, the Tartar, the pilgrim with the little kettle at his girdle, a score of details which are unlike anything seen in any country outside Russia. That is the national note in drama.

Every successful play will contain a universal element which makes the play intelligible to men everywhere; it will also have, almost inevitably, a distinctly national note which reveals the peculiarities of the country of the writer. A dra-

matist may attempt to write a play from the purely universal standpoint, betraying no personal or racial peculiarities; no one has yet succeeded in writing such a play. "There is no dramatist so far known, whose work is accessible for study and analysis, who has written wholly from the point of view of the universal; his social environment and national characteristics have ever been attendant circumstances to influence his product." It is probable that in spite of every care the play will in some way betray its nationality to the man who can read discerningly. John Drinkwater put meticulous care into the study of his *Abraham Lincoln* and he produced a great play, but he slipped grotesquely in his negro dialect; no American writer, north or south, could possibly have concocted the amazing jargon which Mr. Drinkwater put into the mouth of his negro character.

The Roman Plautus may boldly borrow Greek themes and Greek plots, but by the time he has worked over his material for his Roman audience he has produced a play which is neither purely Greek nor purely Roman; the classical scholar can detect the mingled Greek and Roman elements. Shakespeare may take a Roman theme, but before he is through we find distinctive Elizabethan elements thrusting themselves into the Roman setting; in *Julius Caesar*, bears and elephants mingle with unicorns; "The clock hath stricken three," says Cassius. A prominent dramatist of a generation ago refused to admit the existence of American drama on the ground that "humanity is universal" and "there are no general characteristics distinctive of this country alone." An astonishing statement, amazingly wrong. "That humanity is universal" is true; that there are no "general characteristics distinctive of this country alone" is false. The nationality of an American is instantly discovered when he lands in England; his dress, his accent, his vocabulary, his manner of addressing people are distinctive. What is true of an American is true of a Russian, a Frenchman, an Englishman; they all betray their nationality.

In every successful play there is therefore an element which appeals to the men and women of all nations of every

period. This element is found in the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus, the *Tartuffe* of Molière, the *Othello* of Shakespeare, the *Ghosts* of Ibsen, the *Cyrano de Bergerac* of Rostand, the *Hairy Ape* of O'Neill. The basis of this common appeal is the bond which unites all humanity. The men and women of the days of Aeschylus, Kalidasa, Calderon, Shakespeare, Molière, Ibsen, possessed, and their successors still possess, identical primary emotions. These elementary feelings are but few in number; they include love, jealousy, hatred, patriotism, ambition, piety, honor, spite, malevolence,—the complete list is comparatively small. So limited is the number that Gozzi, the eighteenth century Italian dramatist and novelist, insisted that there are only thirty-six possible plots in drama. This assertion seemed to Goethe and Schiller so manifestly incorrect that they set to work to expose its absurdity; what seemed at first an easy task soon proved insurmountable; these consummate dramatists were unable to devise even thirty-six entirely distinct basic situations. A few decades ago a French author, Polti, took up the problem where it had been left unsolved by Goethe and Schiller; in his book, *The Thirty-six Dramatic Situations*, he succeeds, by dexterous manipulation, in formulating exactly thirty-six possible plots, but the reader is conscious that the author is struggling to accomplish his task and that he succeeds only by minute subdivisions of his main themes and by considerable overlapping and duplication.

The establishment of the exact number of plots is, of course, of no real importance but the difficulty found by Gozzi, Goethe, Schiller and Polti in finding as many as thirty-six is striking evidence of the limited number of the fundamental passions and emotions which can be utilized in drama. The "universal element" is, therefore, that which is common to the humanity of every period, of both sexes, of every clime; in the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus and the *Medea* of Euripides it is the violation of the sanctity of the marriage vow; in *Tartuffe* it is hypocrisy; in *Othello* it is jealousy; in *Cyrano de Bergerac* it is the man who helps others and is himself forgotten; in

Ghosts it is mother-love fighting heredity; these are entirely independent of time and nationality.

It is through this universal element that a great play can be understood by a foreign nation; Ibsen's *Ghosts* appeals to every mother who is trying to save her son from the influence of a depraved father; O'Neill's *Welded* is the problem of many a married pair; the German Hauptmann's *Weavers* still finds its sympathetic audience in the mill towns of America. Any doubts about the universality of drama will be dissipated by a careful reading of one or more of the numerous recent collections of plays written by authors of various countries; it will be found that whether written by a Greek, a Roman, a Russian, a Norwegian, a Spaniard, a German, or a Frenchman, the play is intelligible in part at least to any human being anywhere.

An equally important and inevitable element of every drama is what we have called "the national element"; try as he will a dramatist can not wholly separate himself from his environment and his period. An English writer may try to imitate an American trait, but he will almost inevitably betray himself; Granville Barker, in *The Madras House* thought he was depicting an American go-getter in *Mr. Eustace State,* but Americans do not quote Goethe in a business transaction, nor do they say *Audi alteram partem,* nor do they instruct their "smart young historians" to write "monographs," nor do they say "Byron taught me at my mother's knee"; in short, Mr. Granville Barker doubtless knows much about his contemporary Londoners but when he attempted to depict New Yorkers he betrayed abysmal ignorance. In a play written by an Englishman there is an unmistakable English touch; in a play written by an American there is a purely American flavor; the careful reader is quick to note and to recognize this distinctive national note.

A recognition of this vital distinction between the habits, manners and customs of various nations may form the basis of a most fascinating study of drama both ancient and modern. To read with care a collection of foreign plays is like taking a trip abroad. By thoughtfully working through a number of

Russian or English plays we can learn more about Russia and England than many a hurrying tourist gleans from the top of a sight-seeing bus in London or a day or two in Moscow.

An application of this principle to early American drama, for instance, will yield important results. We may study the plays of the period of George Washington with a view to learning something about the social and political conditions of his day. How was Washington regarded during his lifetime? We have now idealized him into a hallowed abstraction; had he reached this pinnacle before his death? Here are some glimpses caught from early plays and contemporary records; these colonial dramas supplemented by official documents give us a vivid idea of Washington's fondness for the theater and his regular attendance when conditions permitted. In his young manhood the theater flourished in Virginia; the cavaliers who settled the Old Dominion did not share the aversion which the austere colonists of New England felt toward the theater. It is not surprising that the drama should have taken root in Virginia sooner than in New England; the Virginians, a gay pleasure loving people, had very little in common with the Puritans. Visitors to Holland may still visit the historic church in which the Pilgrims worshipped before they set sail on their journey to the new country; in this church is kept a record in which foreign visitors inscribe their names and addresses. The writer of this chapter well remembers his last inspection of this book; the page was covered with names: "Mr. X from Massachusetts, a Puritan"; "Mr. Y from Connecticut, a Puritan"; "Mr. Z from Vermont, a Puritan"; the last entry, in bold defiant characters, read: "Mr. X.Y.Z. from *Virginia.* Not a Puritan, thank God!" Here in an epigram is a bit of old England transferred to the new continent; the cavaliers *versus* the Puritans. The Cavalier settlers of Virginia were still attached to the monarchy, with a profound reverence for the established church, an abiding love for old England and English institutions. Their philosophy of life lay in enjoying this world while they could rather than in making preparations for the next; far from feeling any prejudice against the theater they wel-

comed the actor and his repertoire. Virginia and Maryland are in fact, the only American colonies which never had laws prohibiting play acting.

In May 1752 the ship *Charming Sally* sailed from England with Lewis Hallam and his company of actors; in their repertoire were the plays which were at that time the most popular on the London stage; we know that the list of playwrights included Farquhar, Cibber, Rowe, Vanbrugh, Fielding and Shakespeare. For what port did the ship sail? Boston? They knew better. Just two years before the *Charming Sally* sailed the general court of Massachusetts had passed an act to prohibit stage plays and other theatrical entertainments in the commonwealth; the intention of the act was to prevent the establishment of a theater in Massachusetts. The law provided a fine of 5 pounds for every "actor or spectator of any stage play, interlude, or theatrical entertainment in any house, room, or place where a greater number of persons than twenty were assembled together." Small wonder then that after a voyage of six weeks the *Charming Sally* dropped anchor in the harbor of Yorktown, Virginia, in June 1752. The company at once proceeded to Williamsburg and secured a license from Governor Dinwiddie; they were fortunate in finding a theater which had been erected a short time before for a company which had been playing in Williamsburg. The opening performance took place September 15, 1752; the program was made up of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* and a farce *The Anatomist, or Sham Doctor.*

For many years it was believed on the authority of the historian Dunlap that this performance of 1752 was the first professional production in the American colonies. Later investigations have shown that there was a theater in Williamsburg, Virginia, as early as 1716; a theater had been opened in New York City in 1732; a playhouse had been in operation in Charleston, South Carolina in 1736; Thomas Kean had acted Richard III at the First Nassau Street Theater, New York, in 1750. Here then are four important American theatrical events preceding the coming of the Hallams in 1752. Note some of

the significant features of this chronicle; New England is conspicuously absent; New York City had theaters in 1732 and 1750; Shakespeare was in such repute that he was acted in New York in 1750 and in Williamsburg, Virginia, in 1752.

The reference to Williamsburg brings us back to George Washington and his fondness for the theater. Paul Leicester Ford in his *Washington and the Theater* says: "With his resignation from the service and his marriage, came the leisure and opportunity to gratify his love for the drama. Furthermore, as a 'burgess' or member of the Assembly of his colony, an annual visit to Williamsburg to attend the meetings of that body became necessary; and as this period was always the capital's season, when plays were given, if at all, he was at once able to attend to his senatorial duties and to enjoy the theater."

From Washington's ledger we can learn something about theatrical events of his day; from the dramas we can in turn learn much about Washington himself. We should have known nothing about any theatrical performance in Williamsburg in 1760 were it not for an entry in his ledger, under October 8: "By play tickets 7 pounds, 10 shillings, 3 pence"; we find similar entries in the years 1761, 1762, 1763; in 1762 his expenditures for tickets amounted to the considerable sum of 21 pounds, 8 shillings, 3 pence. These entries show conclusively that Washington was not only fond of the theater, but that he frequently, if not invariably, paid for his own tickets. As late as 1768 we find an interesting item in his records: "Where and How My Time Is Spent"; it indicates that he went to Williamsburg with some friends, had dinner there and then attended a theatrical performance; his tickets cost him 1 pound, 7 shillings, 6 pence. We could easily multiply these details; his diary is full of references to visits to theaters in New York, Williamsburg, and Annapolis. From theatrical pictures and the plays of his day we can effectively supplement the information which we gain from non-theatrical sources.

After Washington became president his visits to the theater were invariably ceremonious. Over the president's box was

the United States coat of arms; soldiers were posted at the entrances of the theater; there were usually several on duty in the galleries. Students of early drama are familiar with cuts and illustrations which depict the stately entrance of the president; Thomas Wignell, the manager, is shown, attired in full dress of black; his hair is powdered in the fashion of the time; he is holding two wax candles in silver candlesticks; he is waiting to receive the president at the door of his box and ready to conduct him and his party to their seats.

This we learn from the cuts; let us see what the plays themselves contribute to our knowledge of the living Washington. When William Dunlap's *Darby's Return* was presented at the John Street Theater, New York, Washington was present. Wignell played the rôle of a soldier who returns to Ireland and narrates his adventures in the colonies. Dunlap had inserted into his play several references to Washington, and he carefully studied the president's countenance as each reference was brought out by the actors. The mention of the adoption of the federal constitution and a reference to the recent inauguration of the president, directed every eye toward the president's box. When Darby referred to the stirring events which had brought about a change in government:

> "There, too, I saw some mighty pretty shows;
> A revolution, without blood or blows,
> For, as I understood, the cunning elves,
> The people, all revolted from themselves."

the president smiled. But the smile changed to a look of thoughtful seriousness when Darby told of:

> "A man who fought to free the land from wo,
> *Like me*, had left his farm, a soldiering to go.
> But having gain'd his point, he had, *like me*,
> Return'd his own potato ground to see.
> But there he could not rest. With one accord
> He's call'd to be a kind of—not a lord—
> I don't know what, he's not a *great man* sure,
> For poor men love him just as he were poor."

This passage will repay study as a contemporary expression of the popular estimate of Washington. But Dunlap gives us still a third glimpse of the facial expression of Washington. The serious look has now relaxed;

"How looked he Darby? Was he short or tall?" asks one of the characters in the play. We shall let Dunlap answer, from his personal knowledge of the scene:

"His countenance showed embarrassment from the expectation of one of those eulogiums which he had been obliged to hear on many public occasions, and which doubtless must have been a severe trial to his feelings, but Darby's answer that he had not seen him because he had mistaken a man 'all lace and glitter, botherum and shine' for him until all the show had passed, relieved the hero from apprehension of further personality, and he indulged in that which was with him extremely rare, a hearty laugh."

We have selected President Washington to illustrate the suggestion that drama can be made a fascinating study from the historical as well as from the literary and dramatic standpoint. By combining our Washington materials,—his diary, contemporary pictures, and the plays of his own days we have a more complete knowledge of the man Washington than we could have gained from any single source.

That Dunlap's plays have given us the distinctly national note,—the American viewpoint of Washington, is unquestionable. That they also contain the universal note of patriotism, revolt against oppression, greatness combined with simplicity, is equally certain. The student, the play-goer, the play-reader, by studying the better class of plays as something more than the mere diversion of an hour, will acquire a broader view of life and a deeper insight into the emotions that actuate humanity.

Chapter XL

CIVIC, CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL VALUES OF DRAMA

The theater is in its very nature a democratic art, and throughout its history it has flourished best when supported by the people as a whole rather than by a clique or a cult. In reviewing the various chapters of this book note the general observance of this principle, and mark the occasional exceptions. In India, as in Japan, we found a distinction between aristocratic and popular drama. When Indian drama had become secularized or at the most was still semi-religious we discover plays written by cultivated poets and exhibited before princes in their palaces; this at once suggests the aristocratic Nō drama of Japan, performed originally at court and employing a system of symbols which was intelligible only to a highly educated audience. In Greece the theater was absolutely democratic in spirit and in management; in Rome the financial control was in the hands of the state or the aristocracy, but the performances were open, free of charge, to the entire populace. India, China, and Japan had a popular drama side by side with the aristocratic and court drama. The English Interlude had an aristocratic flavor. In the Golden age of Lope de Vega and Calderon the *mosqueteros*, the shoemakers, and the artisans dominated the stage. Though the spirit of the theater of Corneille was classical and the taste of the court dominated the playwrights, Molière found his warmest admirers in the bourgeois; we know well the enthusiastic support which Shakespeare enjoyed in the groundlings of whom he speaks so contemptuously. Taking these national theaters as a whole the essentially popular element far outweighs the occasional aristocratic exclusiveness. Does the theater in our own country

meet the test? Critics reluctantly admit that there is gross inconsistency in attempting to emphasize the democracy of a theater in which the best seats cost from five dollars up to twenty and the cheapest in the second balcony are priced at a dollar.

When the Boston opera house was built much fine writing appeared in advance concerning a Utopian temple of art, dedicated to the people, where first class performances would be given at a price within the reach of slender purses. Students who knew from experience the vast possibilities of a civic theater eagerly awaited the opening of the new opera house. What happened? Society promptly took possession of its new toy. The newspapers daily exploited the owners of the boxes, they described the gorgeous costumes and flashing jewels of the ladies. The men of humble resources, and the students who had dreamed of an artistic home, climbed wearily to a dizzy height from which they could neither see nor hear the stage performance. Society soon tired of its bauble; the disappointed students reluctantly turned away. Another chance for a democratic theater gone. *Voilà!*

Mr. Henry Jewett struggled heroically for years to establish a genuine repertory theater in Boston; he erected one of the most completely equipped and comfortably arranged playhouses in America; his repertory was comprehensive and well balanced; the company was as able as the financial means at his disposal permitted. It seemed once more that Boston was to have an artistic home for genuine lovers of dramatic art; for reasons which cannot be enumerated here the project languished until the photoplay promoters transferred another closed theater to their own lengthening list of cinema houses.

The terms *Repertory Theater* and *Stock Company* are familiar to American playgoers but most persons who use the terms would find it difficult to indicate offhand the difference between the two types of theater. Though they have some common features they differ in important details. A repertory theater is generally regarded as of a higher type than a stock company; it differs from the commercial theater by bringing

out a considerable number of plays each season rather than featuring long run successes; it produces new plays from time to time, but it also frequently revives famous dramas of older periods, going as far back as ancient Greek and Roman tragedies and comedies. A repertory company is usually larger than that of a stock theater; the greater ensemble makes it possible to have a play in rehearsal while another is running. To a certain extent the manager allows his artists to specialize, but Mr. Jewett insisted on frequent interchanges of rôles, thereby avoiding the objectionable features of the star system, and insuring for his company an all round general training. The development of the moving picture industry has been so vast that the old time stock company is nearly extinct. Thirty years ago practically every small town throughout the country had its "opera house"; it rarely maintained a resident company but it depended upon visiting road companies. Today, in ever increasing numbers, these theaters have been handed over to the moving picture syndicates; the professional stock actors are in Hollywood or are seeking a new vocation.

During the days of their existence the stock theaters usually depended upon passé Broadway successes for attractions. The ordinary career of a New York play was, first, Broadway; second, the road; third, stock; fourth, the photoplays. By the time it reached stock it had been worn threadbare, though it still retained much of its attraction for audiences too remote to permit access to the original production. For years city men who for any reason had failed to attend a New York "success" could count on seeing it later in a suburb or a more distant city. Stock theaters had a lower scale of prices than a repertory theater. The slang phrase for a stock theater as a "ten-twenty-thirty" house sufficiently explains their admission schedule. Three decades ago the billboards in rural towns were brilliant with the colored posters of the traveling stock companies who spent one or two nights or perhaps a week at each of the towns on the circuit. To the older generation they are a pleasant memory; to the younger they are ancient history. Outliving the traveling companies,

resident stock theaters were able to secure at greatly reduced rates plays that were only a year or two old. These suburban companies varied in artistic caliber, and in their theatrical equipment. Some were fairly good, some were very bad. To those who had never witnessed the performance of a really first class company of accomplished actors "stock" was acceptable but after seeing a genuine Broadway cast the others seemed mediocre. The utilization of real stage successes by the talking pictures has completed temporarily, at least, the ruin of the old time companies. Those of our readers who remember those veritable thrillers, *East Lynne, The Two Orphans, Camille, The Octoroon*, and take no pleasure in the mechanical noises of the "talkies" are wondering where they are to look for amusement in these days of inflated prices in the regular theaters.

One of the greatest popular dramatic movements America has ever known is the *Theater Guild* which in the fall of 1927 began its tenth season with over 24,000 subscribers. The statistics of the pledged supporters for each of the ten years of the first decade show graphically the astonishing growth of the organization. Beginning its first year with 175 subscribers, the registration in the next nine years was: 1200, 1700, 2600, 3700, 7000, 14,000, 17,000, 21,000, 24,000. These figures are surpased only by that amazing German organization of similar aims, the *Neue Freie Volksbühne* of Berlin. One of the most useful of the services which the Guild has performed is the touring system by which it has brought to thousands of art-hungry men and women in distant cities and towns first-class performances which would otherwise have been denied them. On these tours the Guild has won the cordial coöperation of civic organizations, educational institutions and local dramatic clubs. To its actors it pays salaries which are more moderate than those offered by the Broadway theaters but in return it can guarantee a lengthy engagement; many actors of the first class prefer the certainty of continued employment with an assured though moderate salary to the anxiety attendant upon the dubious fortunes of a high salaried Broadway

theatrical venture. In its financial aspect the Guild bears some resemblance to a Grand Opera enterprise; both are financed by the subscribers; each has a guaranteed income regardless of the patronage of the general non-subscribing public. The Guild, like a few of the opera organizations, owns its own house and is thus relieved of the real estate worries to which commercial managers are subject.

The Guild is not a money-making enterprise, but it is managed on strictly business principles; it has shown the executive ability of its managers by presenting striking stage effects at a cost not exceeding one third of the amount which commercial managers have ordinarily been obliged to spend for a similar production. The question is sometimes asked whether the Guild is a genuinely professional organization. The management explicitly states that though it has tried to retain the enthusiastic spirit of the amateur it is in its practical working strictly professional; it never utilizes volunteer helpers except in an emergency; it pays wages or a salary to every one who renders a service, even the slightest.

Now and then we note a criticism, more or less caustic, leveled at the Guild. One of the most common is that it favors European plays rather than the work of American dramatists; when in reply it points to its production of Sidney Howard's works the critics retort that it selects his plays not because he is a genuine American, but because they are certain of scoring a financial success. Another charge more serious is that the Guild treats its actors so shabbily that at the earliest possible moment they leave the organization. To refute this the Guild points to the famous artists who stand loyally by the organization; such names as Alfred Lunt, Lynn Fontanne, and Laura Hope Crews are conclusive proof that the organization wins and retains the good will of its company.

The *Subscription Theater* occupies a position midway between the endowed and the commercial institution. Its managers insist that they are actuated purely by artistic motives, and that their primary purpose is the furtherance of theatrical art. They seek in advance subscriptions for a specified number

of performances in a given city; knowing from the size of the list the amount of money upon which they may count, they select their plays, and mount them on a scale commensurate with their means; this financial certainty separates them widely from the commercial managers to whom each new play is a gamble with large stakes involved, hundreds of thousands to the good or to the bad, with no certainty whatever in advance regarding the outcome. Eva Le Gallienne's *Civic Repertory Theater* is the outstanding American success of a theater of the subscription class. No institution in this country has performed a service equal to the Civic Repertory in bringing before the public worthy plays which the commercial managers would refuse to touch.

The American student returns from abroad with an enthusiastic recollection of the nights which he spent in the state or municipal theaters of Germany and France. In those countries success is measured not by box office receipts but by the quality of the performance. Up to the time of the World War the theaters in the capital cities of Germany were in part maintained by a subsidy from the royal treasury; in other large towns such as Leipzig, the municipal government contributed to the support of the local theater and opera house. Since the war the "royal theaters" have become the "state" or the "city" playhouses, but the old policy of conducting them for the cultural benefit of the populace continues. Their financial policy never takes the American form of exacting the highest possible price of admission; it aims rather to charge the smallest admission fee compatible with a first class performance. Though these playhouses are recognized as state or city owned institutions, neither the city, the state nor, in former days, the kings have ever agreed to reimburse all losses incurred in the running of the theaters. The French and the Germans are too thrifty to tolerate so easy going a method; they fix definitely in advance the amount which they will contribute for the operating expenses of the year; the promised sum though generous is not extravagant; in the *Burgtheater*, Vienna, it has been as high as $125,000; Berlin and the *Théâtre*

Français, Paris, have contributed about $50,000 each. The manager is held strictly to this grant; he must estimate the probable receipts from paid admissions; to this he adds the state or city grant; he must plan his program and his budget within the total estimate; he cannot ask for a second appropriation to cover a deficit. This arrangement apparently involves a dangerous uncertainty regarding the financial outcome of the year but it is more apparent than real; until recently, at least, the city-owned theaters have had a monopoly virtual or complete of the dramatic business of the smaller cities; further, the French and the Germans are steady theater-goers; from statistics extending over a series of years the manager can estimate with approximate certainty his box office receipts for the coming year. The German playhouses are a paradise for students and the humble lovers of the theater; the prices of admission to the magnificent theaters of Leipzig, Berlin and Vienna seem absurdly low to Americans accustomed to the rates of the commercial house. At Leipzig excellent orchestra seats cost in the student days of the writer of this chapter 38 cents; in the Royal Opera House, in Berlin, the front rows in the second balcony were reserved for the university at a cost of 25 cents; in the theater in Vienna, the finest opera singers in Austria could be heard from the second balcony for 6 cents (25 pfennige).

Performing some of the civic functions of the city and state-supported theaters of France and Germany is a type controlled by a corporation organized solely for the purpose of providing for its members the finest artistic opportunities at the lowest possible prices. Such an institution may be called a "folk theater". The leading German organization of this kind is known as the *Neue Freie Volksbühne* in Berlin; the membership numbers over 50,000; it owns what is regarded as the finest theater in that city. All profits are used in furthering the artistic plans of the organization. The programs are an admirable blending of the classics and the best of the newest plays; the cost of admission is about thirty cents to regular members.

Granville Barker in his work *A National Theatre* presents the arguments for such a theater in England corresponding in a general way to the *Comédie Française* and the Vienna *Burgtheater*. With the detailed advantages of such an enterprise he cites the objections offered by managers and theater artists; the managers fear the coming of a powerful competitor backed by the resources of the state; the critics and theater artists are afraid that such an institution would hamper the development and check the initiative of private theatrical enterprises.

A notable phase of modern drama is the revival in modified form of the masques of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the mediæval pageant. In 1913 Percy Mackaye's bird masque *Sanctuary* was produced in Meriden, New Hampshire. The result of this performance in a little town twenty miles from a railway was the establishment of more than a hundred bird-clubs and the setting apart of many sanctuaries throughout various states. Mr. Mackaye's masque *St. Louis* was brought out in May 1914. The cast numbered seven thousand; the attendance on the five nights of the performance aggregated half a million spectators. The most notable result of the performance was the creation of a finer civic spirit which had the practical outcome of a new city charter and the voting of bonds for the completion of the municipal bridge.

Mackaye's masque *Caliban* brought out in New York in 1916 at the city college stadium drew 15,000 spectators; the total attendance aggregated at least 135,000. The civic nature of this masque is clearly attested by the *New York Times:* "The production proved remarkably successful for the manner in which it fulfilled its function of being a community masque, enlisting the services of people from every section of the city, geographically and socially, and in the matter of obtaining public support."

A striking feature of modern civic life is the tendency to celebrate important events in the history of a state or nation by an elaborate pageant. Percy Mackaye has rendered notable public services in this form of drama; his *Canterbury Pilgrims* (1903) was given out of doors at several educational institu-

tions and in 1909 as a pageant at Gloucester, Mass., in honor of President Taft. Massachusetts especially presents favorable opportunities for historical celebrations; Professor George P. Baker's open air pageant at Plymouth in observance of the tercentenary of the landing of the Pilgrims was a notable event. In connection with the Massachusetts Bay Tercentenary, 1630-1930, pageants were given in many Massachusetts towns and cities including Fall River, Newton, Quincy, Roslindale, Revere, Northampton, Pittsfield, Taunton, Billerica, Natick, Medford, Reading, Brookline, Abington and Boston.

Mr. Mackaye is one of the most ardent and persuasive advocates of community drama. He defines community drama as "nothing else than the technique of neighborliness—the art, *par excellence*, of resolving the estrangement and conflict of social elements into harmony"; he greatly prefers the name *community drama* to *pageantry*, for the latter word designates but one phase of the general movement which he is endeavoring to promote.

The college study of dramatic technique is additional evidence of the cultural value of drama. The modern undergraduate accepts, as a matter of course, the opportunities which his college offers in dramatic work. The alumnus of forty-five years ago who recalls the curriculum of his own undergraduate days is amazed at the changes which for better or for worse have taken place in the mental outlook of our higher institutions of learning. The writer of this chapter vividly recalls the training which he received in a high grade classical college of the older type. Greek tragedy and Elizabethan drama were taught solely as literature. During four years of specialization in Greek he did not hear a single reference by the professor to the Greek theater or the conditions under which a play was presented at Athens. The students read the *Antigone* of Sophocles, and the description of the plague by Thucydides, in precisely the same manner; it was an assigned task in translation, nothing more; the professor confined his comments to inaccuracies in the student's version, and limited

his questions to grammatical minutiae. The courses in Shakespeare were conducted in very much the same manner. When the catalogue of a well-known university offered a course in the *Technique of Drama* there was much shaking of conservative heads; an old graduate publicly charged the audacious young professor with undermining the work of the president of the college; he was comforted and silenced by the bland assurance that the course would be conducted entirely from a denominational standpoint. Still more venturesome was the professor who announced a course in *Restoration Drama;* the libraries refused to loan any of these plays to the students. When progressive instructors finally proposed a course in *Modern Drama* they had to fight their way, step by step. As recently as twenty years ago a great public library refused to allow university students to consult Oscar Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan*. Today, it would be difficult to name an American college or university which has in its curriculum no courses on drama. Theatrical criticism, practical work in playwriting, the construction of stage scenery and equipment are commonplaces in academic activities. Every college has its dramatic club offering amateur stage performances. The secondary schools have joined the movement; it is hard today to secure a position on the English staff of a first class high school unless the applicant has had some training in practical play production or at least in dramatic criticism.

Anybody that reads much on drama comes sooner or later upon Dr. Johnson's famous couplet:

> "The drama's laws the drama's patrons give,
> And we who live to please, must please to live."

Whether or not Johnson was unconsciously quoting from the poet Dryden may be questioned, but it is a fact that the older poet had expressed an identical thought though phrased more elegantly:

> "They who have best succeeded on the stage
> Have still conformed their genius to the age."

For many years the idea conveyed by these lines has been a shield and buckler to the managers who present plays of dubious morality. "We are obliged to give the public what it wants." "Why do you not bring Shakespeare to Boston?" "Because Boston does not want Shakespeare." They have scarcely resurrected this old platitude when Fritz Leiber comes to Boston and fills for a week a run-down theater in an inaccessible part of the city. Must the theatrical magnate and the dramatist give the public "what it wants"? Brander Matthews apparently thought so. In his *Study of the Drama* he squares his artistic conscience by claiming that if the dramatist really gives the public what it desires it is precisely what he also wishes to give it:—"Even though the playwright has ever to consider the playgoers, their opinions and their prejudices, he is under no undue strain when he does this; and the most of his effort is unconscious, since he is always his own contemporary, sharing in the likes and dislikes of his fellow-countrymen, the very men whom he hopes to see flocking to the performance of his plays." Evidently Mr. Matthews was not convinced of the leadership of a playwright. Dryden and Johnson incidentally exposed themselves to the charge of recognizing by implication the right of a dramatist to pander to the lowest tastes of a mob if this were the only available means of gaining a living. Professor Matthews apparently does not consider a vulgar play a mere catering to the mob; the writer simply shares the prevalent love of coarseness.

Neither of these attitudes satisfies a sensitive ethical nature; much rather will the purist feel inclined to join the modern school, which insists that it is the business of the playwright to lead rather than to join the mob. Ibsen was in the vanguard of these moral heralds; he boasted that he was always ten years in advance of his nation on ethical and sociological questions; he prided himself on the alleged fact that when the Norwegians had finally caught up with his attitude on a given question he was already ten years further along on a new tack. Archibald Henderson in his *The Changing Drama* expresses the new attitude:—"The modern drama-

tist has successfully shattered the theory that he can be only the intellectual echo of the crowd. . . . The dramatists of the newer dispensation are leaders, not mere spokesmen, of the ideas and feelings of the motley throng assembled in the playhouse."

This revived doctrine of the leadership of the dramatist,—"exemplars of the higher emotions destined to become the common heritage of the race" is simply a concrete application of the age-long contest over the general question, "Art for art's sake' or "Art for morals' sake"? While he was a revered professor at Oxford, John Ruskin tried to convince his brilliant pupil, Oscar Wilde, that all great art has an ethical basis. "All art is quite useless" was the flippant reply of the graceless young dandy.

In his *L'Envoi,* Oscar Wilde pays a beautiful tribute to his old teacher, and he regretfully records the fundamental difference of opinion which marked "a departure from the teaching of Mr. Ruskin . . . a departure definite and different and decisive. . . . In his art criticism, his estimate of the joyous element of art, his whole method of approaching art, we are no longer with him; for the keystone to his æsthetic system is ethical always. He would judge of a picture by the amount of noble moral ideas it expresses; but to us the channels by which all noble work in painting can touch, and does touch, the soul are not those of truths of life or metaphysical truths. . . . Nor, in its primary aspect, has a painting, for instance, any more spiritual message or meaning for us than a blue tile from the wall of Damascus or a Hitzen vase. It is a beautifully-coloured surface, nothing more." Those who have sat reverently before Raphael's *Sistine Madonna* in the Dresden gallery will have little sympathy with Wilde's claim that this canvas is "a beautifully-coloured surface, nothing more."

The champions of the "art for art's sake" theory include some famous names. Zola says: "Never have the great masters preached or desired to prove anything." Baudelaire insisted that "No poem will be so great, so noble, so truly worthy of the name of a poem, as that which has been written solely

for the pleasure of writing a poem." Still another Frenchman, Flaubert, asked whether a book might not be superbly beautiful "irrespective of what it says." John Millington Synge, the Irish dramatist, said: "Drama, like the symphony, does not teach or prove anything."

At the other extreme is the French dramatist Eugène Brieux who declared that he was born with the soul of an apostle. He dismissed with a few contemptuous words the plea of "art for art's sake": "The pursuit of art for its own sake is charlatanism."

A compromising group includes names quite as weighty as those in the extremist ranks. Goethe in his *Conversations* said: "I do not object to a dramatic poet having a moral influence in view; but when the point is to bring his subject clearly and effectively before his audience, his moral purpose proves of little use." Lessing in the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie:* "I will not say that it is a fault when the dramatic poet arranges his fable in such a manner that it serves for the exposition or confirmation of some great moral truth. But I may say that this arrangement of the fable is anything but needful; that there are very instructive and perfect plays that do not aim at such a single maxim, and that we err when we regard the moral sentences that are found at the close of many ancient tragedies, as the keynote for the existence of the entire play." And finally, the Belgian dramatist Maeterlinck: "I do not believe that a poem should sacrifice its beauty to point a moral, but if, without losing any element that goes to make up its interior or exterior beauty, it leads us to truths as acceptable but more encouraging than the truth which leads us nowhere, it will possess the advantage of accomplishing a twofold, though uncertain, purpose."

One of the most striking features of the modern theater movement is the organization of amateur dramatic societies designed to bring the theater within the reach of the every-day man. Art magazines are fully conscious of the increasingly important rôle which the Little Theater is playing in this cultural work. The *Theatre Arts Monthly* devotes an entire

issue annually to the growth of the amateur companies; the *Theatre Magazine* has in each number a department devoted to "the tributary theater."

There is an almost irreconcilable difference in the point of view between the dramatic critics of the press and the more enthusiastic members of the amateur theatrical societies; the newspaper men are inclined to dismiss the whole Little Theater movement with the contemptuous epithet "arty"; if we listen to the amateur radicals the whole future of the American drama lies in the fortunes of the Little Theater. A notable feature in the evolution of these theaters is the change in their output from the conventional "one-acters" to the orthodox three act form. The managers have finally recognized the definite change of public taste and have secured an even stronger hold on their constituents by adjusting themselves to this preference. It is noticeable, however, that these theaters still consider the one act form a necessary preliminary practice for the more serious work of constructing longer plays.

The dramatic writer who knows his business does not share this point of view; he is fully aware that the two types are as distinct as are the short story and the novel; fiction writers do not begin on short stories as a preparation for a lengthy novel. There are clear-headed practitioners who consider it an easier matter to write a drama of three or four acts than a one act play of a dozen pages. The four act play is a Marathon run; the one act piece is a hundred yard dash; the technique of the two forms differs in important details. William Archer never appeared to less advantage as a critic than when he contemptuously referred to the shorter form as "a mere piece of dialogue." The most ardent admirer of Mr. Archer finds it difficult to apply this flippant characterization to Barrie's *Twelve Pound Look*, or Synge's *Riders to the Sea*, or Maeterlinck's *The Intruder*.

The list of flourishing little theaters, many of them connected with leading universities, is surprisingly long. Three of the best known are: The Pasadena Community Playhouse Association, with which Gilmor Brown is associated; the Caro-

lina Playmakers of the University of North Carolina, of which Professor F. H. Koch is Director and the Little Theatre of Dallas, Texas, well known for its success in winning for three successive years the Belasco cup at the annual One Act Play Tournament.

Some sincere friends of the new movement regret the inability of the amateur companies to secure unbiased criticism from trained dramatic experts; working in out-of-the-way communities or in college towns, remote from the field of observation of the experts who write for the dramatic columns of the urban press, such comment as they succeed in arousing is friendly but biased or unscientific. A play which seems excellent, and acting which appears remarkable to an audience unfamiliar with great plays and competent acting, may prove lamentably weak when brought before a professional critic or a sophisticated city audience.

A standard work of the Little Theater movement is Kenneth Macgowan's *Footlights Across America.* This book covers the entire field of American amateur dramatics. Mr. Macgowan thinks that the history of the successful Little Theater "is a progress from amateurism to professionalism"; he regards the amateur actor as better educated than the professional, and as familiar with higher ideals.

The successive chapters of this volume have reiterated the religious origin of the drama in all the countries which have come under discussion. It is important that we keep this fact in mind when from time to time we read of organized movements to purge the drama; to cleanse the theater, not to destroy it, is the avowed purpose of the reformers.

The early Christian church proscribed with ample reason the theater of the Roman Empire; not only were the plays and their presentation on the stage indescribably vile, but the habit of burlesquing the most sacred rites and doctrines of the Christian church had become so prevalent that no Christian could think or speak of the theater without shuddering. As the new religion grew a strange phenomenon began to appear in the heathen theaters. Again and again as the actors reached

the part of their performance where they were expected to burlesque the rites of the new faith one of them stepped forward and cried out: "I am a Christian". A moment of tense silence, then a roar of anger: *Ad leones;* the new convert was hurried out to his doom. These startling interruptions of a dramatic performance became so numerous that a Roman audience was chronically nervous lest a comedy might suddenly turn into a tragedy. With full warrant, then, did the early Christian church anathematize the heathen theater. In the middle ages drama had its rebirth in a cathedral. When Prynne and Jeremy Collier fulminated against the theater their charges were specifically aimed at the indecencies which had crept into the drama; if the church handed the performance of the Mysteries over to the guilds it was in part because the cathedrals could no longer contain the vast throng of attendants, but in part also because of a ribald element which had begun to desecrate the sacred performance.

True to its origin the drama is now returning to its early religious home. The churches are once more recognizing its value as an instrument of ethical training. Modern colleges of Religious Education almost invariably include in their curriculum courses in pageantry and religious playwriting. The graduates of these institutions readily find excellent positions as pastors' assistants in churches of various denominations. On all the great religious days of the Christian year we note pageants and stage performances as part of the ritualistic observance. Our study of the growth of the drama from its primitive cradle in the temples of India and Greece has prepared us to appreciate the historic significance of the prevalent revival of religious drama.

APPENDIX

PRINCIPLES OF DRAMATIC CRITICISM

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Acting Value. "The first and most important requisite of a play is acting value. Its literary merits and reading qualities are minor considerations." Swan, *How You Can Write Plays.*

Action. Actors often confuse action and movement. Action is not necessarily physical gestures; running, or waving the arms may be movement, not action. Genuine action is the expression of an emotion or a thought. This expression may be absolute silence, entire freedom from bodily motions, or loud cries or violent bodily movements, all depending upon the nature of the emotion or thought which the action expresses.

Anticipation. Anticipation is a form of *suspense.* It is also a kind of *finger post.* "The playwright lets the audience know that certain things *might* happen, gives it to understand they probably *will* happen; he arouses their interest in these prospective happenings, and makes it anxiously await the events." Swan. Anticipation is a *finger post* heightened by *suspense.*

Anti-Climax. A serious defect in a play is the continuation of a scene or an act after the moment of keenest interest. It arises from the failure of the dramatist to know when he has reached this point; he continues until he has ruined the effect previously produced.

Apart. Distinguish the soliloquy, the aside and the apart. In a soliloquy no one but the speaker is on the stage. An aside is a remark made by one character to another when others are present; the others do not hear the aside. An apart is a soliloquy when others are on the stage; it is designed for the audience; the other characters do not hear it. The terms aside and apart are often confused.

Argumentative plays. A play should appeal to the emotions of the entire audience. An argumentative play is certain to arouse the dissent or animosity of at least a portion of the house.

Arrangement of names. Alphabetically; order of appearance; men and women in separate groups; social rank; dramatic importance; connected groups, such as members of a household; artistic rank.

Beginnings. As a rule the real action of a play rarely begins at the rise of the curtain. In most plays it is easy to detect where the exposition stops and the real action begins.

Big Scene. It is sometimes called "The scene with a punch." It occurs usually in the penultimate act, sometimes early in the last act, rarely at the very end of a play.

Blind Alley Theme. A moral problem incapable of a satisfactory solution; either alternative is shocking. Examples: Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* and Maeterlinck's *Monna Vanna.*

Bridging Over. At the close of each act the audience should anticipate some definite thing in the following act or acts. There should be an indication of the course which future events are to take. Example: Ibsen's *Pretenders* (end of Act I): Haakon says: "At last, then, I am King of Norway"; Earl Skule replied: "But I rule the realm." Expectation is thus aroused.

Brunetière's Law. Brunetière was a French critic who died a few years ago. His dramatic theory is known as Brunetière's Law: In every play there is a conflict of some kind; it is either a clash between two wills or desires, or the grapple of a human will with an impersonal or unseen force. Some critics deny the universality of the law, but Swan insists that he has "never yet read or seen a good play that did not somewhere contain a conflict."

Cast. A few modern dramatists omit entirely the list of characters in some or all of their plays. This method is not to be recommended for experience has shown that an audience enjoys looking over the cast on the printed programme and forming a preliminary acquaintance with the persons who are to appear. Little or nothing is gained by the omission of the list of persons, for the information usually conveyed in such lists must be given in some other way,—by a stage direction as each character comes upon the scene, or by the dialogue of the other characters.

Catastrophe. A Greek word meaning, literally, "to turn up and down, to overturn." In drama it means the final event, the dénouement; the outcome may be either tragic or joyous.

Characterization. In modern plays it is customary to give a brief description of important characters. Dramatists differ greatly in their descriptive ability. An ideal characterization is brief, and, above all, graphic; it makes the person stand out clearly before the mind's eye.

Climax. "That point in the play at which the action reaches its culmination, the most critical stage in its development, after which

the tension is relaxed or unravelled." B. H. Clark, *A Study of the Modern Drama.*

Closet Drama. A play not intended to be performed; it is written solely for the reader.

Coincidence. Most authorities say it should be used sparingly if at all. Bernard Shaw defends it. A certain amount is necessary, but incredible circumstances have their limits, and when incredulity is aroused the audience refuses to accept the play.

Consistency. Aristotle emphasized consistency. We have a right to depict an inconsistent character "provided he be consistently inconsistent." A rather common defect in character drawing is to represent a person as doing or saying things which the character himself would not have said or done. The dramatist should not ask himself: "What would I do or say at such a moment," but "What would this character do or say at such a moment?" "A character that is merely a reflection of the author's self is always artificial. He carries no conviction."

Convention. A departure from the reality of life made necessary by the requirements and limitations of the stage. Example: a banquet lasting only ten minutes; a whisper heard in the last seat of the upper balcony.

Credulity. An audience has a right to accept, as truthful, statements seriously made in the course of the play. An exception is, of course, what is said by a character who is known to the audience to be a liar. The audience is justified in feeling angry when it discovers that the writer has deliberately deceived it. This principle is not vitiated by the fact that persons who are depicted as saints may turn out to be villains, as in Molière's *Tartuffe*, or those who are represented as hard-hearted or brutal are revealed as kind and generous, as in *David Harum.* In all such cases there is something about the persons that prepares the audience to accept without demur the disclosure of the real character.

Crisis Theory. William Archer the English critic and dramatist denied the universality of Brunetière's Law. His own theory, known as the crisis theory of drama, is: "A play consists of a series of minor crises leading up to a major crisis."

Curtain. A "curtain" is the scene on the stage at the close of an act. Until recently an "emphatic curtain" was popular. That is, the curtain went down on a striking stage scene. Of late we find a tendency toward "unemphatic curtains"; The argument in their favor is thus given by Clark: "Life is as a rule unemphatic, and it is only

in crises that unsuspected identities are revealed and sudden reversals of fortune occur, and the writer of unemphatic act endings feels that 'things just happen this way'."

Deception. Although the writer should not deceive the *audience* it is allowable for the characters to deceive *one another*. As a rule the audience knows more about the true condition of affairs than any of the characters.

Definition of Drama. "Any representation of imaginary personages which is capable of interesting an average audience assembled in a theater." William Archer, *Play Making*.

"That is dramatic which by representation of imaginary personages interests, through its emotions, an average audience assembled in a theater." George P. Baker, *Dramatic Technique*.

"A play is a representation of an imagined phase of life performed by actors on a stage." Swan.

Developing Character. A character may deteriorate in the course of the action of the play; he may become regenerated; he may remain unchanged. Any moral movement upward or downward is technically known as "development." Examples: Macbeth degenerates; Anna Christie in O'Neill's play rises; Iago remains static.

Dialect. When a writer introduces dialect into his play it is advisable to dilute somewhat the strength of the original. An actor who played in Barrie's "The Little Minister" said that if he were to speak in its full vigor the dialect which he was supposed to be using, not ten persons in the audience would understand him. The effect should be produced by accent rather than by a purely dialectical vocabulary.

Dominant Idea. A well-constructed play has a single dominant idea clearly conceived and succinctly stated.

Example: *The Unchastened Woman.* Dominant Idea: A certain woman thinks she can do everything she likes with everybody. Her husband vainly hopes that she will become "chastened in spirit, after having profited by experience."

Dramatic Situation. Swan defines a situations as "that point in a play where the story might be said temporarily to culminate in an explosion of emotion, either gay or serious, and the characters combine in such a way that for a moment the interest of the audience is excited to an extremely high pitch." The screen scene in *The School for Scandal* meets this test.

Economy. In a good play every line advances the plot, or reveals character or does both. Example: *The Unchastened Woman*: Caroline:

"Divorce is always ridiculous. I made up my mind you'd never get free for anything *I* should do." This remark reveals character and also advances the plot.

Emotion. Modern critics lay great stress on the element of emotion in drama. Some claim that to put more emphasis upon the emotions than upon the intellect in judging a play is an indication of inferiority. William Archer thus replies to these critics: "This is a criticism not of dramatic art but of human nature. We may wish that mankind took more pleasure in pure apprehension than in emotion; but so long as the fact is otherwise, that way of handling an incident by which the greatest variety and poignancy of emotion can be extracted will remain the specifically dramatic way."

Ending. The careful dramatist devotes special attention to the close of his play. In a one-act play the approved ending is an epigrammatic remark technically known as "a snap of the whip." In a Greek play the action falls off at the very end, relieving the tension by a calming, generalizing sentiment. In some of his tragedies Shakespeare follows the Greek method. There is no established rule in modern plays.

Entrances and Exits. There should be legitimate reasons for every appearance of an actor on a scene and for leaving the stage. The reasons need not be explicitly stated but they must be obvious to the audience. In old English plays characters came and went arbitrarily with no logical reasons for their movements.

Essentials of a Dramatic Scene. It must advance the story, exhibit character, and hold the interest; it should contain good dialogue, and if possible, arouse suspense.

Essentials of a Play. A good story or a good situation does not necessarily make a good play; in addition there must be a study of character, observation of life, originality of method.

Exciting Force. That which starts the action of the play. Other names: *Erregende Moment*, lighting of the fuse, initial impulse. It usually manifests itself soon after the opening of the play; occasionally it precedes the rise of the curtain; in that case the play opens in excitement and the audience must be told the cause of the commotion.

Expectation. At the close of each act there should be something definite to which the audience looks forward with pleasure or at least with interest.

Exposition. The first thing an audience is likely to ask at the rise of the curtain is "Who are these people?" "Where is the scene of the action laid?" The dramatist should answer these questions early; if

he fails to do so the audience will soon lose interest. The exposition may be given in a statement printed on the program; the more usual method is a speech or a dialogue by one or more of the characters; it may be concentrated near the opening; it may be scattered throughout the play.

Farce. "In a farce, as contrasted with a genuine comedy, the plot, the situation, the incidents are the controlling factors, and the characters are only what the plot allows them to be or forces them to be." Matthews, *A Study of the Drama.* Swan distinguishes them from a different point of view: "We laugh at comedy because it is so; we laugh at farce because it is not so. Comedy is probable, farce may be possible, but usually it is not possible. Comedy produces pleasant and sympathetic mirth; farce evokes the boisterous guffaw."

Final Reaction. A sudden change in the situation, near the close of the play, at a time when the audience thinks it can clearly see the outcome. The final reaction startles them by the suggestion of an ending different from that which it had anticipated; the fear proves groundless.

Finger Post. A finger post is a remark or a stage direction clearly indicating something which is to happen later in the play.

Foreshadowing. It is wise to give the audience some hint of what is to come; this is called foreshadowing. We should arouse the expectation and we should direct it into the right general direction, while compelling the audience to conjecture the exact turn which affairs will take. This may be done by the use of fingerposts. In Pinero's *Mid-channel* Zoe Blundell says: "You'll see when I put an end to myself, it will be in the winter time." This is a fingerpost, arousing expectation but "compelling us to conjecture the exact turn which affairs will take."

Forgetting a Character. A dramatist should try to construct his plot in such a manner that the leading characters appear in each act.

Function of Speeches. "Every speech in a play must advance the story, or develop character or raise a laugh." Swan. This is in marked contrast to the diffuse conversation of real life.

Guessing. To keep an audience guessing is not the same thing as deceiving it. Mystery and detective plays exercise the wits of the spectators. In *The Bat* and *The Cat and the Canary* many of the audience reached in advance their own solution of the mystery. If at the close of the play they found they were wrong, they could not blame the playwright for he had never given them a real hint regarding the

outcome; he had merely kept them in the dark. Those who had solved the mystery were pleased; those who had been on the wrong track were chagrined but they had no cause for indignation.

Hat Cue. A point near the end of a play when the audience knows that it is really over, though the actors continue to talk. A star dreads to see an audience leaving while his part still has some minutes to run.

High Comedy. Also called "comedy of manners." Brander Matthews defines it as a "comic play which deals with life sincerely and satirically without exaggerated caricature in the character-drawing, and without extravagant fun-making in the episodes." "The action, however serious it may seem, never stiffens into serious drama; and, on the other hand, however amusing it may be, it never relaxes into the robust and boisterous mirth of mere farce."

Examples: Molière's *Femmes Savantes*, Congreve's *Way of the World;* Sheridan's *School for Scandal;* Augier and Sandeau's *Gendre de M. Poirier.*

Hyporcheme. Hyporcheme or hyporchema is a Greek word. In Greek tragedy a hyporcheme is a joyful dance executed by the chorus at a point in the play when the gloom seems dispelled and a happy outcome assured. The joy proves to be premature and ill founded; the tragic outcome is all the more terrible, after the happy anticipation of the chorus. In modern drama hyporcheme may be defined as joy, more or less ecstatic, not destined to be realized.

Idea. A play should contain one central motive or idea and the working out of that idea.

Instructive Element. When a dramatist is treating of the contemporary social or political conditions of his own country, we should cultivate the habit of searching his plays for contributions to our knowledge of the time and place.

Irony. Dramatic Irony is of two kinds:

(a) The character says something which he believes to be true; the audience knows that either: (1) he is mistaken, or (2) his words, though true, have a deeper significance than he realizes.

(b) The speaker deliberately uses an ambiguous expression, wishing the audience to understand it in one way, but the person addressed to interpret it in another way.

Keeping a Secret from the Audience. Swan, in accord with most of the modern writers on drama, insists that the playwright shall keep no important secret from the audience. "There is one great primal necessity which underlies all drama; the dramatist must take the audi-

ence into his confidence; the audience must know; it must understand clearly what he is *doing*, what he is *trying* to do."

Label Names. The old-fashioned use of label names (Mrs. Malaprop, Sir Lucius O'Trigger), is now obsolete except in farce. Modern dramatists devote great care to devising names which, though without etymological significance, seem to fit the personality.

Leitmotiv. A constantly recurring word or phrase in a play. "Dey don't belong." O'Neill, *The Hairy Ape*.

Melodrama. The word strictly means "drama accompanied by music." Example: *Hazel Kirke.* The modern meaning is "a drama filled with highly exciting stage effects, such as fires, explosions, hair-breadth escapes."

Mood. A scene in a play is designed to arouse a certain emotion, to evoke a mood; it may be gay or sad, a dreamy reverie, a thoughtful speculation, but it is generally regarded as bad art to mix moods. A comic character at a deathbed scene would be intolerable. After the somber episode it is allowable to evoke a lighter mood, to relax the strain on the audience. In O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock* a bacchanalian scene follows so closely upon a murder that the incongruity is shocking to some readers of the play.

Mot de Caractère. A jest or exclamation which vividly reveals the individuality of the speaker. Example: "I think the devil will not have me damned, lest the oil that is in me should set hell on fire." Falstaff.

Mot de Situation. A remark which excites the laughter of those who are aware of the circumstances under which it was uttered, but is meaningless to others. Example: "What was he doing in that galley?" (Molière)

Mot d'Esprit. A mot d'esprit is a witticism detachable from the context. It can be used by anybody. "I can resist anything but temptation."

Number of Acts. The old-fashioned play of five acts finds few modern imitators; the usual number in a modern play is four or three. Some of the newest plays, as, for example, O'Neill's *Emperor Jones*, abandon entirely the act structure and are divided into numerous scenes.

Number of Characters. A large cast is a probable indication of a romantic play with considerable external action; it will appeal largely to the eye. A small group suggests that dialogue will predominate over outward action; such a drama especially if it discusses a problem will require the concentrated attention of the audience.

Obstacle Theory. "Place an obstacle between a man and his desire. Whatever prevents a character from attaining his wish is an obstacle." This is really one phase of Brunetière's law of conflict.

Peripety. The Greek form is peripeteia. A reversal of fortune. Originally it was a change from sorrow to joy; today the word is usually connected with tragedy and means a sudden decline from prosperity to adversity. Examples: Oedipus, Lear.

Permanent Setting. The employment throughout the season of the same stage materials in various plays, avoiding monotony by rearrangement. Gordon Craig thus uses screens and curtains. Lights of various colors can be played upon the scenery. An outfit of screens, curtains and lighting apparatus is simple, economical and can be employed with great effect for several months.

Practicable. An object on the stage which is real, not merely an imitation. A practicable window can be opened or closed; a practicable bookcase contains real books. Stage hands use the shorter form "practical."

Preparation. Most actors of leading rôles prefer to make their first appearance after the audience has been brought into a state of anticipation by a previous description or dialogue. Rarely is the leading character on the stage at the rise of the curtain.

Probability. The true test of a dramatic incident is not "Is this true," but "Will the audience believe it true?" Aristotle said that a tragic poet does not make use of an event because it really happened, but because it happened so convincingly that he could not invent more plausible conditions.

Propaganda Plays. Most critics insist that a dramatist is not primarily a *reformer;* he is an *observer of life;* his business is to *entertain* the audience, not to preach to it.

Properties. Everything on the stage except scenery and costumes. "Hand props" are small objects such as pistols, hand mirrors and vases.

Realism. "Realism demands a more or less literal picture of people and happenings. It insists that human beings on the stage shall say and do only those things that are reasonably plausible in life." Macgowan, *Continental Stage Craft.*

Recognition by Tokens. The discovery of the identity of a person by some external sign, as a scarf, a necklace, or a photograph. Aristotle regards this as the least artistic form of recognition; he thinks that it should be brought about through the logical development of the plot.

Repetition. Playwrights recognize the fact that to state an important fact once is not enough. Scribe repeated all his important points three times in the first act. Benavente, the Spanish dramatist, said: "Everything that is of importance to the proper understanding of a play must be repeated at least three times during the course of the action."

Retardation. An artificial method of prolonging the plot. At a critical point, as some decisive action is about to be performed or an important event to occur, the movement is interrupted by an accident, an unexpected incident, or the sudden appearance of another person.

Scene à Faire. Certain episodes or interviews which must be actually presented on the stage in action; they must not be merely narrated by the characters.

Skeleton Setting. In a skeleton setting ordinary scenery rather than screens and curtains are employed. The skeleton setting uses the same scenery throughout a play, modifying or altering slightly the parts so as to produce the effect of variety. Although the scenery is essentially the same, the casual observer scarcely notes the recurrence of the general design; the alterations and additions are sufficient to produce the impression of a change. Arches, walls, or pillars stand throughout the play or are merely varied by the use of additional bits of scenery or stage furniture appropriate to the individual acts. The permanent setting is used throughout the entire season; the skeleton setting is employed in but a single play.

Slice of Life Plays. The expression is attributed to Shaw. A "slice of life" is an episode which has not been brought to a conclusion at the end of the play; the outcome of the argument is left to the imagination of the audience. Such plays run the risk of arousing dissatisfaction on the part of the audience. Aristotle insisted that a play should have an *end;* he defined an *end* as "that which has nothing after it." Shakespeare's tragedies meet the test of Aristotle's definition.

Soliloquy. Distinguish constructive and reflective soliloquies. Constructive soliloquies are designed merely to convey information to the audience. Reflective soliloquies reveal the inner thought of the speaker.

Splitting a Scene. Shifting a discussion from one important matter to another before the first is finished, and then, later, returning to the *first* subject which had been left unfinished. This is distracting to the audience.

Stage Directions. The last fifty years have brought about a great change in the matter of stage directions. The persons in the early plays were less complex than those of recent times. As our settings have be-

come more elaborate and our characters subtler, directions have increased and the dramatist is inclined to comment on his *dramatis personae*. Ibsen was one of the first to introduce stage directions. Shaw has carried to an extreme his comments on the characters and the action of his plays.

Stage Settings. In a modern play of four or three acts we frequently find the same setting employed in two or three of the acts; this is an economy greatly favored by a certain type of producers. Occasionally we find a reversion to the Greek method of presenting a play without any change of scenery from beginning to end. This, though economical, has the disadvantage that it fails to gratify the desire of the audience for variety.

Stichomythia. A Greek word. A sharp, pointed dialogue, in which each remark consists of but a line or two. Archer calls it "cut and thrust dialogue." It was much employed in Greek drama and is sometimes found in modern plays.

Surprise. William Butler Yeats, the Irish dramatist, regards surprise as the very essence of drama. Swan does not consider it as effective as anticipation; it is but a momentary sensation; anticipation may extend over a considerable portion of the play.

Suspense. Suspense is "a state of uncertainty, usually with anxiety or expectation." It is a powerful element in drama; a favorite method is that employed in the case of condemned men on the point of execution. The audience knows that steps are being taken to secure a pardon or at least a reprieve. They are in tense anxiety lest the order to stay the sentence shall come too late.

Symbolism. The employment of a concrete object to convey an abstract idea or to evoke a mood. It may be either intellectual or emotional. In intellectual symbolism we must ascertain the literal meaning of the symbol and apply it figuratively to the play. It is a purely intellectual process. In emotional symbolism we must surrender to the mood which the dramatist is endeavoring to arouse in us. We may, if we choose, employ the intellect in ascertaining the meaning and application of individual symbols but the real force of an emotionally symbolic play is felt in a sympathetic response to the emotional appeal.

Technique. Professor George P. Baker defines it as follows: "The technique of any dramatist may be defined, roughly, as his ways, methods and devices for getting his desired ends."

Thesis Play. A play written primarily to prove or at least to emphasize an ethical or social doctrine or dogma. Example: Björnson's

A Gauntlet, written to prove that the double standard of morals is ethically unjustifiable.

Tradition. A method of stage procedure which has been handed down from former generations. The action may or may not be "true to life." Example: Rapping on the French stage as a signal for raising the curtain.

Tragic Crisis. An unexpected incident following the climax, which suddenly gives a new direction to the action of the play.

Tragic Force. The introduction of the counter-activity which is to bring about the catastrophe. Example: Iago in *Othello.*

Unities. See chapter VII.

Universal and National Element. In every play, regardless of the nationality of the author, there is a universal element, inasmuch as all human beings have certain qualities, desires, passions in common. At the same time we may fairly expect to find some trace of the nationality of the author, since it is practically impossible for him utterly to escape from the influences of his race, his period, his surroundings. Even Shakespeare's Roman plays have a distinctly Elizabethan flavor.

Unnecessary Characters. College students of dramatic criticism are constantly asking: "Why is this or that character in the play? What purpose does he serve?" It is bad art to introduce a character unless he is in some way connected with the story. Aristotle anticipated this principle: "Anything which can be omitted from a play without missing it, *is not essential* to the play."

Villains. An elemental villain has no redeeming moral qualities; he is bad all through. A complex villain's wickedness is in part redeemed by good qualities.

Wavering. A common defect in stage plays and motion pictures is the failure to keep to the theme with which the play started. Two sources of this defect are: (a) The subject matter is not sufficient for a full length play. (b) The writer fails to fully develop his material; he quickly completes his main theme and begins a new story or a new series of adventures.

White Marriage. A marriage in name only: "Everything stops at the church door." In such a play the outcome is usually the transformation of the nominal marriage into a normal and real union. Examples: Sheldon's *The Boss* and Moody's *The Great Divide.*

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